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Female Leadership in Hong Kong

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PhD

2015

Female Leadership in Hong Kong

Abstract

This thesis investigates how the Chinese version of paternalistic leadership theory, a male-biased theory of leadership, influences the expectations surrounding the traditional role of women in Chinese cultural settings. A critical review of the literature concerning Chinese leadership highlights the failure of the hegemonic conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership to take into account women in managerial positions. Addressing this omission, this thesis focuses on how ethnically Chinese female leaders lead in Hong Kong and how they execute their leadership role. This focus is achieved by addressing the gap in current knowledge regarding ethnically Chinese female leaders in Hong Kong and how they experience their leadership role from a feminist postcolonial perspective. The research takes the form of a case study, focusing on a Hong Kong based trading organisation, utilising a qualitative methodology including interviews, document analysis and Government policies. Yet, to achieve a holistic view of the current case, the case study takes a multilevel approach to its analysis including several actors, such as the Hong Kong Government, interest groups, the organisation, managers and their subordinates. This research project examines how these managers negotiate postcolonial issues such as Othering, mimicry and hybridity to fulfil their social roles as women in a Chinese cultural society in addition to their leadership responsibilities, which quite often contradict each other. The thesis presents a new understanding of how women lead, negotiate demands and prioritise both their professional and personal lives, ultimately presenting a conceptualisation that takes paternalistic leadership as a starting point, but incorporates the singularities of being an ethnic Chinese woman in Hong Kong.

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Introduction

Female leadership in Hong Kong

Chinese societies have seen dynamic feminist developments take shape in the last three decades. Traditionally, female members of the family were relegated to carrying out domestic chores, but women in Hong Kong are increasingly attaining a formal education and entering the work force as educated employees (Tang et al., 2010). Consequently, women in Hong Kong are gaining more formal positions of power, which were conventionally occupied by men (Leung and Chan, 2012). This traditionally male-oriented society is changing in the light of women not only entering the workforce, as has happened throughout most of the 20th century, but due to also the rise of women to positions of power and influence inside and outside the workplace (Chow, 2005).

This study aims at understanding how Hong Kong ethnically Chinese female managers are influenced in their leadership behaviours by Hong Kong institutional and organisational factors; how they interact within their working and personal environments; and how they lead their subordinates, all of this examined through a feminist postcolonial feminist lens.

This study takes a postcolonial feminist approach and is a multilevel project, accounting for the institutional, organisational and social forces that may influence Hong Kong ethnically Chinese female managerial behaviours. In addition, it explores how these women manage their male and female subordinates, utilising the Chinese version of paternalistic leadership theory and a conceptualisation of the traditional role of women in Chinese societies as a framework for the analysis. Previous studies on Chinese leadership have identified the indigenous version of

paternalistic leadership as the most suitable theoretical framework to explain leadership in Chinese cultural settings (Wu and Xu, 2012).

The deployment of an indigenous Chinese theory of management, over the potential use of a western developed theory, is based on the argument that a Chinese theory will consider the cultural context of the studied phenomena (Leung, 2012); in this specific case, female, ethnically Chinese leadership in Hong Kong. The utilisation of an indigenous theory does not exclusively belong to Chinese cultures; for example, Jackson (2013) presents an indigenous African view on management. Moreover, and from a postcolonial stance, the use of indigenous theories may allow an alternative to the hegemonic reproduction of western knowledge and a better explanation of phenomena from the research participants' perspectives.

This study is founded on the assumption that research concerning organisational behaviour in China should go beyond a solely managerial focus and add a socio-cultural dimension. The singularities of Chinese culture provide justification for the above assumption, and it has been suggested that comprehensive cultural contextualization is the only way in which the phenomena can be completely understood (Zhu et al., 2012). Due to this, the analysis of the case will be conducted following a multilevel approach. First, at the interpersonal level, the relationship between female managers and their subordinates will be analysed, utilising the theory of paternalistic leadership and the conceptualisation of the traditional role of women in Chinese societies as the theoretical framework. This is followed by an analysis of the employing organisation, through the examination of official and unofficial human resources policies. Finally, the institutional level of analysis will be presented, focusing on government legislation and institutions such as relevant government commissions to investigate their influence on female

leadership in Hong Kong. The entire analysis of the current research project will be conducted from a postcolonial feminist stance, utilising only indigenous Chinese conceptualisations to analyse the current issues from a female managerial perspective.

Interestingly, mandarin Chinese does not distinguish between leadership and management and both are termed *Lingdao*, a term used to describe people in positions of power (Fu and Wu, 2000). Furthermore, the women that are the central focus of this study are middle managers, who exercise leadership within their working teams. Therefore, western distinctions between leaders and managers will not be made in this case, as the aforementioned managers are both managers and leaders; and such a distinction, which does not exist in their native environment, would be an imposition of a western conceptualisation contradicting the postcolonial approach of this study.

Research relevance

There are several general and specific justifications as to why it is important to study leadership in China and why female leadership must be specifically considered. The rationale behind this study is based on several general reasons. First, the current process of globalization, has allowed enterprises to expand and enter new countries and territories, and China and Hong Kong have played a central role in this process. This point has been exemplified by Tacconelli and Wrigley (2009), who explain the prominence of this new market for the retailing industry. Second, Chinese and Hong Kong based companies have acquired prominence and established themselves as world players, as can be seen in the case of Haier Group, a Chinese home appliance manufacturer which has become a world leader in the production of refrigerators (Liu and Li, 2002).

Additionally, the new role that Hong Kong and China play in the international division and movement of labour of both Chinese and non-Chinese nationals to and from Chinese territories, and the effect of these movements on the global economy and labour market (Cheung and Chan, 2008), suggest that Chinese management remains salient to doing business. Finally, this study would not be possible without the opportunity that has emerged from the opening of Mainland China to the outside world, allowing potential advances in management research (Leung, 2009).

This situation has led to two different approaches towards the advancement of scholarly knowledge: the first, advocating the development of indigenous Chinese knowledge, as is the case with the development of the Chinese indigenous version of paternalistic leadership; and the second, the testing of established theories in a new cultural environment, seen in the development of the Chinese version of organisational citizenship behaviour (Farh et al., 2004). The study of Chinese culture may be able to help identify and classify concepts within leadership and social sciences in general, concepts which might be culturally specific, termed *emic* and only relevant to China, but also concepts which might be culturally universal or *etic*, and applicable to other non-culturally Chinese contexts (Leung, 2009).

Regarding the more specific relevance of the research, every year an increasing number of Chinese women join the workforce and many attain managerial positions (Tang et al., 2010). Contemporary China is undergoing large social changes in many areas, yet these social changes do not affect both sexes equally. Yukongdi, and Benson (2005) highlight the limited transferral of female gains concerning education and legislation to career development in Hong Kong. The authors offer gender roles, attitudes towards women and general factors, primarily organisational,

as potential reasons for this lack of advancement. Tang et al. (2010) discuss the existence of a 'glass ceiling', which limits female professional development in Chinese societies. This glass ceiling reinforces the traditional Chinese female role, which places emphasis on women maintaining a position within the family and a role as the primary care giver.

A gendered comparison of Chinese society has shown that women are influenced more by contemporary social changes than men (Tang et al., 2010). For example, women experience greater family demands than men, but they are also increasingly expected to engage in paid work outside the home, consequently causing higher levels of stress among females (Choi and Chen, 2006). This example highlights the need for a holistic approach, encompassing the private and professional dimensions of the female managers who participate in the current study.

Contribution to current knowledge

Based on the literature review, presented in the following chapters, a series of factors to be considered in the project design have been established. First, even though there are several indigenous Chinese leadership theories, only one is sufficiently well established and researched, allowing its use in the current research project. This is the indigenous version of paternalistic leadership (Chen and Farh, 2010; Farh and Cheng, 2000; Farh et al., 2006; Farh et al., 2008; Wu and Xu, 2012). Second, women in culturally Chinese societies have been gaining formal positions of power and influence, challenging the traditional submissive stereotype, based on Confucian values. Nonetheless, there is still a lack of research applying indigenous Chinese theories of leadership aimed at understanding this phenomenon from a culturally Chinese perspective. The paucity of research extends not only to indigenous theories, but also to

any kind of research regarding women in leadership positions in the workplace (The Women's Foundation, 2006).

Moreover, the relevance of the male-biased theory of paternalistic leadership demands scrutiny in contemporary society, where women are becoming more prominent in managerial roles. The present research aims to address the gap in current knowledge regarding ethnically Chinese female leaders in Hong Kong and how they execute their leadership role. Furthermore, due to the multilevel approach, the influence of company policies and the Hong Kong institutional framework on female management behaviour is also examined. In addition, the study analyses the relevance of a model of paternalistic leadership for accounting for the different and contextually contingent experiences and roles of ethnically Chinese, Hong Kong female managers. Additionally, the study aims to analyse the relevance of a male-biased theory of paternalistic leadership for understanding the experiences and roles of female managers, an insight that might be useful in other cultural settings. The study strives to serve as a reference point for any scholar who engages with the study of female managers in a business setting within a Chinese cultural context, as well as current companies which operate in a Chinese cultural context which employ female managers

Aims and objectives of the research

The aims and objectives of the current research are as follows. To start, this thesis aims to understand the implications of a Chinese version of paternalistic leadership accounting for the experiences and roles of female, ethnically Chinese managers in Hong Kong. The Chinese version of paternalistic leadership is currently the most researched and applied indigenous Chinese theory of leadership, but it is still at an infant state of development (Chen et al., 2014). However, as its name suggests, the theory was developed in a male oriented society, as China

was and still is in many respects, utilising predominantly male role models (Westwood, 1992, 1997). Therefore, its broad significance may be questioned. Chinese people and culture have been the focus of a process a modernisation (Faure and Fang, 2008), which has delivered, among many other social changes, a new group of managers, - well-educated women who are gaining formal positions of power and influence (Hang-yue and Pum, 2009). Taking these issues into consideration, a postcolonial feminist perspective will be used as a lens to critically evaluate paternalistic leadership. A postcolonial feminist perspective is used to expose the shortcomings, omissions and limitations of the current conceptualisations of paternalistic leadership, providing an alternative account of the lives of female managers.

The ascent of women into leadership positions has undermined the traditional role of women in Chinese societies, opening the door to a redefinition of the female position in Chinese societies. Therefore, from this feminist perspective, the effect, influence and relevance of the traditional role of women in culturally Chinese societies is also considered, as this role influences cultural expectations about how Chinese women should behave in a traditional setting.

Finally, the last objective is to assess the Human Resources (HR) policies, both formal and informal, of the companies where these leaders are working, in addition to the institutional framework. Research in leadership has established that the type of company, industry and HR policies that shape leadership behaviours and perceptions of effectiveness such as employee performance (Li, et al., 2012). By the same token, the Hong Kong institutional framework where leaders operate has also been seen to affect leadership behaviours (Scott, 2005). Therefore, distinctions should be made when analysing institutional frameworks since different Chinese cultures operate in different institutional settings. The final objective is to establish how the

Hong Kong institutional framework influences female leadership behaviour. To fulfil these objectives, the following research questions have been established.

Figure 1: Research objectives and questions

Contribution	Research objective	Research questions
Theoretical contribution	To examine, using a postcolonial feminist perspective the relevance of paternalistic leadership for accounts for the experiences and roles of ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong	How can the integration of paternalistic leadership and postcolonial feminism contribute to an understanding of how ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong negotiate their leadership role in Hong Kong? What are the limitations of paternalistic leadership from a postcolonial feminist perspective?
	To develop a conceptualisation, based on the findings of this study, of how ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong exercise leadership in Hong Kong	How do paternalistic leadership and postcolonial feminism contribute to an understanding of ethnically Chinese female managers' leadership behaviour in Hong Kong?
Data collection and analysis	To evaluate the institutional and organisational influences on the leadership role of ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong	In what ways do institutional and organisational factors drive and constrain the managerial role of ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong?
	To examine the cultural and social influences on the leadership role of ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong	How do cultural and social factors impel and inhibit the managerial role of ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong?

Source: Own elaboration

Greater China and Chinese cultural context

Even though there is one country called China, officially the People's Republic of China, and unofficially referred to as Mainland China, there are many Chinese cultural societies with different degrees of autonomy classified as Chinese from a cultural perspective (Fan, 2000; Yau, 1988). For example, Hong Kong and Macao are part of the People's Republic of China but have a large degree of political autonomy. Taiwan, which is officially named the Republic of China, is a politically independent entity but considered by the Beijing government as a rebel province. Therefore, 'Cultural Chinese' is the term that better represents the shared history, experiences and ethnic ancestry of this group of people (Hong et al., 2010).

In a looser sense, the concept of Chinese societies could also be applied to Singapore, with a prominent Chinese ethnic population and entrenched Chinese values; or to Chinese communities in Southeast Asian countries, who migrated from Mainland China and have largely kept themselves separate from the indigenous population, as is the case in The Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia, among other countries. These communities have been the focus of research on Chinese cultural values (Westwood, 1992, 1997) and can consequently be classified as Chinese in terms of ethnicity and culture.

The idea of Chinese culture as a unit independent from political differences is mostly based on the study conducted by the Chinese Cultural Connection (CCC) in 1997. This study identified 40 core Chinese cultural values which are independent from political systems and define what it means to be culturally Chinese. Yet Fan (2000) conducted a study validating and expanding the values to 71, showing the importance and contested nature of these values. While Chinese people have been said to share the same values and beliefs, it has been highlighted that they may understand and apply these beliefs in different ways (Fan, 2000).

Political differences have not stopped researchers from using and comparing theories, research instruments and techniques among these different political jurisdictions, where communities are part of the Chinese cultural context; for instance, *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Psychology* (Bond, 2010) makes no distinction in general terms between different groups of culturally Chinese people. The text quite often presents findings from studies of Mainland China, together with findings from Taiwanese and/or Hong Kong samples, making no cultural distinctions. The following is a quotation from Tang et al. (2010), included in *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Psychology*:

Flexible and egalitarian gender roles attitudes are generally endorsed by better educated individuals, especially female university students, in China (Chia, Allred & Jerzak, 1997), Hong Kong (Leung & Ng, 1999), Taiwan (Zhang, 2006) and Singapore (Teo, Graham, Yeoh, & Levy, 2003). (Tang et al., 2010: 537)

This quotation is a clear example of how research in Chinese cultural settings is used and presented in a unifying manner, independently of geographical or political boundaries. Additionally, the same methodology and conceptualisations have been adopted by *The Handbook of Chinese Organizational Behaviour* (Huang and Bond, 2012), a similarly relevant and influential book in the field of organisational behaviour. The International Association for Chinese Management Research (IACMR, n.d.), the body which groups the leading management scholars in Chinese studies, also takes a similar approach, highlighting that “[it pursues] scientific analyses of individual, group, and firm behaviors in the Chinese context” (online). Also, it is clear from its activities that by Chinese context, it means culturally Chinese societies. As an illustration, its main publication, the peer reviewed *Journal of Management and Organizations*

Review, publishes articles not only related to Mainland China, but also to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao and Singapore; in essence, research conducted in Chinese cultural contexts.

Furthermore, leading scholars in Chinese management research do not account for regional differences. One such example is Anne Tsui, one of the top 100 most cited researchers in business, economics and management, according to the Academy of Management (webapp4.asu.edu) and Kwok Leung, the President of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (iaccp.org). When conducting research in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China, Anne Tsui considers these territories as culturally Chinese. Yet, when the differences are political or institutional, they may be significant to the study and require highlighting as well as discussion.

Finally, thematic reviews of management in China also tend to include a broader Chinese perspective and are often guided by the concept of Chinese culture instead of political divisions. This point is eloquently expressed in the literature review conducted by Jia et al. (2012). Their article analyses the levels of local contextualization within research carried out in China, but focuses on Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, all being considered under the umbrella of Chinese cultural research.

However, as stressed by Huo and Randall (1991) and Stening and Zhang (2007), researchers should acknowledge regional and subcultural differences within China. Throughout the extended Chinese territory and its numerous populations, Chinese culture is prone to the creation of subcultures, which leads to the possibility of encountering emic knowledge, which falls under the umbrella of Chinese culture. Also emic knowledge that is only relevant to the

specific Chinese subculture studied, in this case, Hong Kong, as well as etic knowledge which is universally relevant across cultures.

Based on this evidence, it is possible to conclude that in the field of management, Chinese culture tends to be understood as a unified concept. Yet, singularities of Chinese subcultures must also be taken into account and in the case of Hong Kong, whilst 92.6% of the population are ethnically Chinese (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014), Hong Kong was still a British colony for more than 150 years, an influence which demands consideration.

Theoretical approaches to research in China

Current academic debate with regard to research in the field of management in China, and the question of how to advance knowledge within this area, is primarily based on two perspectives. The first perspective advocates “a Chinese theory of management”, which calls for the development of new theories that take into account the uniqueness of the Chinese culture. “A Chinese theory of management” is advocated, based on the view that Chinese culture and society is so unique and different from the rest of the world that it necessitates distinctive management theories to understand the Chinese case.

This claim is supported by the following factors: five thousand years or more of uninterrupted Chinese culture; a belief system based on Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism; and an exclusive and distinctive writing system which lacks an alphabet, among other factors. Based on these differences, it can be argued that most foreign theories fail to grasp, understand and explain the management phenomena observed in Chinese culture. Therefore, only theories that originate in China and take into account the emic components of the culture, those which are

only present in Chinese culture, are able to explain social phenomena within Chinese society (Child, 2009; Barney and Zhang, 2009; Leung, 2009, 2012; Whetten, 2009; Chen, Wang and Huang, 2009; among others). Facing this situation, Tsui has expressed that:

Over two decades, research in Chinese management has exploited existing questions, theories, constructs, and methods developed in the western context. Lagging are exploratory studies to address questions relevant to the Chinese firms and to developed theories that offer meaningful explanations of Chinese phenomena (2009: 1).

Additionally, Baskin (2007) has highlighted that these explanations could offer the West the possibility of learning from traditional Chinese philosophy and its potential application to the field of management. In contrast, the second perspective aims to develop “a theory of Chinese management” that postulates the adaptation of existing management theories, almost all created and developed in the United States of America (USA), to the Chinese cultural context. An empirical example of this is the development of the theory of paternalistic leadership in China. There are several versions and models of paternalistic leadership, such as the one presented by Aycan (2006), which is not culturally specific. In contrast, Cheng et al. (2000) have developed a model and a measurement instrument for an indigenous Chinese version of the theory, which takes into account the uniqueness of the Chinese cultural characteristics.

Crucially, one important site of debate whether and how western management theories and indigenous Chinese factors should interact and influence research in the field of management in China (Barney and Zhang, 2009; Leung, 2009, 2012). The present study follows the approach of “A Theory of Chinese Management”. The approach is formulated by the selection and use of the adapted theory of leadership to the Chinese context, the Chinese version of paternalistic

leadership. However, the identification of “Context-free knowledge”, which can be described as knowledge that is not linked or limited to cultural boundaries and can be universally discovered, applied and tested (Tsui, 2004), is also considered. Context-free knowledge will be evaluated in the analysis section of this thesis, as it is believed that this type of knowledge can provide useful insights into management in all cultures.

Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises a total of eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background, context and rationale for the study, which may be considered as the aims, objectives and the contribution to knowledge of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on indigenous Chinese theories of management and more specifically, the Chinese version of the theory of paternalistic leadership which forms one of the central pillars of this thesis. The chapter reviews different theoretical models that have been presented as well as empirical research conducted in this area. Chapter 3 introduces another theoretical pillar; namely, postcolonial feminism and reviews the study of women in a Chinese cultural context, the role of women in society, in addition to a review of female leadership in Chinese cultural contexts. Chapter 4 presents the study’s methodology and outlines the rationale behind the use of qualitative interviews as a method of data collection for the first level of analysis; the analysis of formal company documents and use of qualitative interviews for the second level of analysis; and the review of official publications and in-depth interviews for the third level of analysis. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 focus on the collected data, developing a multilevel analysis. Finally, Chapter 8 encompasses the findings and discussion of the study, examining the contributions of this thesis to existing standards and research, as well as highlighting the limitations and further methodological considerations, before concluding with recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1

Hong Kong History and Institutions

Introduction

This chapter conceptualises the institutional makeup of Hong Kong, which forms the context for the main issues presented and developed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. This contextualisation resonates with institutional theory in how it underscores the prominence of institutions and social structures in shaping societies and the behaviours of its members, questioning how these systems come into existence, how they are adopted in society and then eventually fall into disuse (Scott, 2005). Moreover, the contextualisation of Hong Kong institutions is directly linked to the institutional level of analysis of this study. This review endeavours to relate these aspects of society in Hong Kong to women and their social roles, creating a holistic view of the socio-cultural environment and its social implications.

Hong Kong Characteristics

The following section focuses on the analysis of Hong Kong's institutions to provide an applicable conceptualisation for the current project. The aim is to understand the influence of the institutional arrangement on ethnically Chinese, female Hong Kong managers. Hong Kong's status as a British colony for more than 150 years has undoubtedly influenced values, outlooks and belief of the local population. However, the British colonizers only took effective charge of the defence and general administration of the territory. A non-interference policy was maintained with regard to domestic issues, traditional approaches to management and business and cultural values. This approach has ultimately led to traditional values being sustained and not replaced by western approaches or values (Selmer and Leon, 2003; Westwood, 1992; Redding, 1993). Moreover, empirical research on Confucian ethics in China has concluded that the Confucian

philosophy is particularly relevant to Hong Kong as a society (Lin and Ho, 2009; Warner, 2010). In essence, even if Hong Kong is an international and cosmopolitan city, its inhabitants' culture is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and traditions (Schnurr and Mak, 2012). Increasingly, management researchers borrow social perspectives from institutional theory to understand different organisational behaviours, the rationale being that due to social forces, organisations are becoming increasingly similar. Organisations are constantly pressured by three different forces, coercive, normative and mimetic, that shape their structures and practices (Lo et al., 2011).

Utilising the parameters set by Hall and Soskice (2001) in *Varieties of Capitalism*, Hong Kong can be categorised as a liberal market economy. As described in the book, a liberal market economy involves a lack of economic governmental regulation, unequal income distribution and a low degree of union affiliation. Yet Hong Kong's culturally Chinese characteristics are maintained, leading Witt and Redding (2013) to argue that the classifications presented in *Varieties of Capitalism* are not applicable to Hong Kong, which lacks a system that can be clustered with any western system. Witt and Redding (2013) argue that Asian business systems are different from their western counterparts and present a series of Asian business system clusters: (post) socialist economies, advanced city economies, emerging south-east Asian economies, advanced north-east Asian economies and Japan. The authors place Hong Kong as an advanced city economy, together with Singapore, providing a new conceptualisation of how the capitalist model and institutions are adapted in Hong Kong.

The basic administrative governmental stance is "big market, small government", with the government's main economic responsibilities being to stimulate the economy and maintain

full employment, a distinctive characteristic of Asian governments (Chanet al., 2014). This governmental stance accords with a productivist welfare state discussed below.

The Hong Kong business system is characterised by a low level of union affiliation, and workers' unions tend to have very limited institutional influence. This trait is closely linked to cultural characteristics, where labour relations are personalistic, especially in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). As a consequence, two types of employee are notable: a minority who are personally connected to their employers (who display a larger degree of loyalty), and the rest. The latter group tend to change jobs more readily, often motivated by monetary reward or training. Training and professional development are also powerful tools for recruitment and job retention because skills acquisition is primarily provided by employers and not the state (Redding et al., 2013). Banks lead Hong Kong's financial system and are the main source of capital, with lending mostly based on relationships and long-term objectives. The state plays a regulatory role and is perceived to be effective (Witt and Redding, 2013). Figure below summarises the main institutional characteristics in Hong Kong.

Figure 2: Institutional characteristics of Hong Kong

Category	Measure	Hong Kong
Education and skills	Adult literacy	0.969
	Employment tenure	Short
	Skills acquisition	Private
Employment relations	Union density	23.2%
	Organisation principle	Industry
	State intervention in wage bargaining	Low
Financial system	Main source of external capital	Banks
	Allocation criterion	Relationships/ long term
	Main source of external capital	Banks
Internal structure of the organisations	Decision-making	Top-down
	Main reason for promotion and pay rises	Relationships
	Extent of delegation	Some
Ownership and governance	Main ownership form large firms	Family
	Main controlling owner	Family
	Investors' protection index (out of 10)	9.0
State	Type	Regulatory
	Decision-making	Bottom-up and top-down
Inter-firm relation	Networks	Investment networks SME networks

Source: Witt and Redding (2013)

Welfare and Employment in Hong Kong

By western standards, Hong Kong unemployment rates are relatively low; for instance, the unemployment rate for 2012 was 3.4% on average (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014), whereas in the UK, it was 8 % (Office for National Statistics, 2013), a possible consequence of the at-will employment doctrine supported by the Hong Kong government and businesses alike. Unemployment trends show male unemployment to be higher than female, yet this could be due to the definition of the unemployed, those actively seeking work. Women seeking part-time or casual, flexible employment to fulfil other social duties are not included (Hang-yue and Pum, 2009). Moreover, these statistics do not reflect the potential number of women who have given up managerial positions to fulfil their social roles as mothers, wives or care givers and are therefore classified as not actively seeking employment.

The current government has a laissez-faire approach to regulation or, as its advocates prefer to call it, positive non-interventionism (Luo and Shen, 2012), which may be a continuity of the British local authority example, demonstrated during their time as colonial rulers. Any intent to introduce labour legislation is widely resisted, mostly by private businesses, on the grounds of a potential lack of competitiveness of the territory (Hung, 2012). Consequently, Hong Kong fits into the model of a liberal market economy, with a voluntarism approach to labour relations which, in principle means that the government has a limited intervention towards labour relations. This approach has been inherited without any major modification from the time the territory was a British colony (Ng-Sek Hong, 2010).

Even if the territory qualifies as a developed city-state when measured by the United Nations international human development indicators (UNHDR, 2015), the creation of a welfare state has never been a governmental aim, as has been the case for most of western continental

Europe. According to Pfau-Effinger (2004), and Esping-Andersen (1990), welfare states can be divided into three categories: the social democratic, the conservative-corporatist and the liberal welfare. The social democratic model aims to minimise the social differences among citizens by (among other methods) engaging both genders in active paid employment and the state taking a central role in the provision of welfare. In contrast, the conservative-corporatist model does not aim to reduce social inequality but to replicate the current social structure; the state only provides welfare when family members are not able to generate it for themselves. Moreover, the state does not promote female employment and consequently, countries under this system have high unemployment (yet this number may remain unaccounted for, due to their status as mostly mothers). Finally, liberal welfare systems involve the state in a limited capacity, acting only in extreme cases. It is believed that the labour market should self-regulate and that individuals should provide for themselves. This system reinforces social differences and the state does not influence the inclusion or retention of women in the workforce.

It has been argued that none of the systems presented by Esping-Andersen (1990) adequately represent East Asian economies (Holliday, 2000; Aspalter, 2005; Wilding, 2008). Consequently, Holliday (2000) presents a new model of welfare system called the “productivist welfare system”, characterised by the subordination of state policy below economic and industrial objectives and the strong economic growth orientation of the state. The East Asian welfare systems are grouped into three categories: Facilitative (the case for Hong Kong); Developmental-Universalist; and Developmental-Particularist.

As part of the Productivist Facilitative model, Hong Kong has a welfare state based on the subordination of economic policy below social policy, a very low degree of social rights, and

the prioritisation of markets (Holliday, 2000; Wilding, 2008). This model strongly resembles the liberal system presented by Esping-Andersen (1990), yet the primary difference is the strong focus on economic growth.

As for the practicalities of the welfare system, there are no unemployment benefits or official pension system, and a minimum wage was introduced as late as 2011 (Hung, 2012). The current reality of Hong Kong society is one of large disparity among classes, as is evident by its Gini coefficient of 0.53 (Chan et al., 2014). In contrast, while showing the contradictory nature and pragmatic approach of the local government, affordable housing, known as *public housing*, has been provided for millions of residents. Moreover, universal health care is delivered free of charge for those who cannot afford it (Hung, 2012). The government's stance, which aligns with the productivist model, is based on the belief that welfare and economic growth are incompatible. However, certain aspects such as healthcare and education (see section in education below) are supported as a way to enhance human capital, necessary for human development.

Lee (2005) denounces Hong Kong governmental coping strategies towards the Asian economic crises of 1997, which impacted negatively on the welfare benefits of the territory. The government strategy was based on maintaining a regime of low taxes and low public expenditure as an attempt to keep the "business friendly" image of the city. Consequently, financial resources were reduced for areas such as health and education, and programmes such as the aforementioned public housing were phased out. For Lee (2005), Hong Kong forsook an important opportunity to develop its welfare state further. Based on these measures and their implementation, Lee (2005) defines the Hong Kong government attitude as social authoritarianism, ideologically based on "Asian values" derived from Confucian philosophy. The

argument is based on the idea that the government aims at avoiding the blame from the consequences in welfare reductions in society, and making the people who are affected responsible. What is more, the political elite of Hong Kong have used welfare for social control and to secure the loyalty of interest groups; for instance; civil servants, enjoy a larger degree of job security than the rest of the population and a pension system was established by the government to secure their loyalty and work (Tang, 2000).

Institutional theory argues that the employment structure of an economy is influenced by state policies and social institutions where the family unit is most relevant (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Pfau-Effinger (2011) argues that there is a direct relationship between the welfare state and work/family arrangement and the author presents a series of six work/family arrangements representative of the most common types of familial economic units. The first is a family economic model, where both parents in the family work primarily in agricultural settings; children are viewed as economically active elements of the family and are given work as soon as they are capable. The second is a housewife model of the male breadwinner family with a clear division of roles. Males are expected to engage in paid employment and to provide for the family, and women are expected to stay at home and become the carers for the family. Third is the male breadwinner/female part-time care provider where both males and females are expected to engage in full-time paid employment, but females are only expected to work until the couple have children when she will take a part-time job or disengage completely from paid employment.

The dual part-time breadwinner/part-time care provider model is a more egalitarian model which demands both partners to engage in employment, yet when the couple have children, both parents will reduce their work and share the care responsibilities. The dual

breadwinner external care provider model sees both partners engaging in full-time employment and the care responsibilities delegated to the State which, based on the welfare model, should provide. Finally, the dual breadwinners/extended family care model consists of both parents working and the care responsibilities are assigned to the extended family.

However, none of these arrangements directly fit the Hong Kong case. The traditional arrangement of the Chinese family is strongly based on the model of a male breadwinner, whereby the female stays within the home and performs domestic duties. Yet, the increase in the number of women entering the labour market has affected this model (Lee and Wong, 2004). Hong Kong has a liberal welfare state in which the state plays a limited role. Care for the children and elderly is the responsibility of the individual families, who should produce the means to pay for it. This role is generally assigned to foreign domestic workers who represent a source of cheap domestic labour. Based on this affordable domestic help, most women in managerial positions are able to remain in full-time paid employment.

Social expectations of the roles of the family and its members are linked to Confucian philosophy, a philosophy that advocates for a strong central government as the only legitimate power; the philosophy places care responsibilities on the family members, independent of government action (Tang, 2000). It is clear that Confucian philosophy does not assign the State a welfare role in society; people will cater for their own needs within their family. In Hong Kong, if care for the family members cannot be delivered from within the family, as is usually the case, a private solution (e.g. in the shape of foreign domestic help) is sought.

Political environment

The official name of Hong Kong is “Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” (HKSAR). The territory is an integral part of the People’s Republic of China, yet it has a large degree of political autonomy. This political autonomy is highlighted by what is known as “one country, two systems”, the slogan used at the time when Great Britain returned Hong Kong to the control of Mainland China, and which epitomises China as a communist country respecting the autonomy of Hong Kong, a capitalist territory (Zhao et al., 2012). The political autonomy is based on a constitutional document called The Basic Law, which was promulgated by China and took effect in 1997, after the formal handover of the sovereignty of the territory from the British colonial government to the Chinese (Lam, 2012).

The relationship with the Beijing government has been one of mutual testing. Arguably, the most controversial issue between these two governments is found in The Basic Law, which stipulates universal suffrage for the territory. Yet, there is no predetermined date for its implementation, and the Beijing government aims at keeping the status quo, whereas some stakeholders in Hong Kong expect universal suffrage to be implemented (Lam, 2012). Hong Kong is headed by a Chief Executive; the person elected is selected from a very small pool of people and receives the tacit approval of the Beijing government. The Chief Executive is aided in his/her functions by the Executive Council, a government body dedicated to policymaking. The Council is formed by 15 principal officials, of whom only one is female and 14 non-officials, including four females and all members of the Council are directly appointed by the Chief Executive (Hong Kong Government, 2013).

The civil service in Hong Kong has traditionally enjoyed strong political power and influence. The service has been mostly inherited from British colonial times and bureaucrats are

central to policymaking. However, the traditional power of this institution has been undermined since the handover of sovereignty to China, and recent years have seen a considerable increase in the political power of the Hong Kong business tycoons (Wong, 2007). The predominance of business tycoons in contemporary Hong Kong society is such that the European Parliament expressed its concerns regarding how these tycoons affected business competition in the territory. A concern perhaps born from a lack of fair competition law in the jurisdiction which could guarantee a level playing field for businesses in the territory (Ting and Lai, 2007).

There is also a unicameral legislative body called the Legislative Council (LegCo), an institution inherited from colonial times, its members totalling seventy. Yet, only half of these seats were elected by universal suffrage; the other half were indirectly elected by functional constituencies which are, in essence, interest groups (Loh, 2006). There are only eleven female members of the LegCo, which represents a ratio of one woman for almost every six men (Hong Kong Government, LegCo, 2012). This ratio indicates the moderate minority that women form within the legislative body, while also highlighting the fact that they remain largely underrepresented in the Legislative Council. Consequently, this fact may draw attention to questions such as how and why women have not had access to public office, or how women in positions of power are viewed among society in Hong Kong. The following section will discuss the economy in Hong Kong and the relevance of small and medium enterprises such as the business studied in this research project.

Hong Kong Economy

According to the Gwartney et al., (2012), Hong Kong enjoys the highest level of economic freedom out of the 144 countries and territories examined in the report, with 8.90 out of a possible 10. This index measures “the degree to which the policies and institutions of

countries are supportive of economic freedom” Gwartney et al., (2012). In practical terms, a hand off approach to regulation applied by the government allows the market to self-regulate. Self-regulation has formed part of the argument used by the government over time to avoid passing legislation on gender discrimination. This is because Hong Kong-style capitalism is mostly based on “small government” and “positive non-interventionism”. However, since 1997, this “positive non-interventionism” has become harder to maintain (Cheung, 2013).

Based on the report, it is possible to establish that contemporary Hong Kong enjoys an extremely large degree of economic freedom, and that both the public and private institutions of the territory support this freedom, which people believe is the basis for their prosperity. This belief is not new among the people of Hong Kong. Siu-Kai and Hsin-chi (1990) found that favourable views regarding the laissez-faire approach of the government towards economic management were present in the territory more than twenty years ago.

Hong Kong initiated economic development during its early days as a British colony, and working as a trading post between inner China and Europe, the city-state quickly became known as the gateway to China (Wang and Cheng, 2010B). Additional to its trading business, the territory rapidly developed as an incipient manufacturer base. However, after the Japanese occupation, which finished in 1945, its incipient industrial base was almost exterminated. A few years later, during the Korean War, the USA, followed by most western countries, imposed a trade embargo on Mainland China (Huang, 2012). Based on these two factors, Hong Kong lost its ability to function as a trading post.

Additionally, thousands of refugees began to migrate to the territory to escape the civil war and economic hardships of Mainland China. These social and political conditions opened the

door to the second phase of economic development within the territory, which started in the early 1950's (McDonogh and Wong, 2005). Making use of its abundant cheap labour, Hong Kong entered into a process of industrialization, where the economy was refocused towards the production of export-oriented manufacturing. Whilst cheap labour is an important factor in industrialization, there must also be a business/government environment that fosters this development. Both of these factors were present in Hong Kong, one of the most open economies at the time (Warner, 2010). During this time, thousands of women entered the workforce, mostly as cheap labour working in factories, a social phenomenon that came to be known as “working daughters”. Female workers in factories were usually preferred because of their higher ability to perform manual tasks when compared to males (Salaff, 1995).

Consequently, Hong Kong started to climb the industrial ladder, evolving from the production of low added value manufacturing such as textiles to the production of more sophisticated, higher added value products. The increase in economic development brought inflation, which translated into higher labour costs, eroding the advantage of an economic model based on cheap labour (Bowring, 1997). By the same token, in the early 1980, Mainland China started to open its doors to foreign direct investment, leading to the third phase of economic development, during which the bulk of the territories' economy moved from a manufacturing base (which did not disappear, but mostly migrated to Mainland China) to a services-oriented economy (McDonogh and Wong, 2005).

Most of the services that contemporary Hong Kong provides are based on the needs of Mainland China, which has been slowly developing its manufacturing base and has positioned Hong Kong once again as a central trading port. Quite often, companies have their production

located in Mainland China but their legal and commercial offices are based in Hong Kong (Redding et al., 2013). This shift makes the gendered composition of the current workforce less relevant to the labour market and adds emphasis to the skills and education of the employees. More recently, Hong Kong has been developing as a major financial hub by providing not only regional, but also global financial services (Selmer and Leon, 2003). Companies in Hong Kong are highly paternalistic in their management style and practices but, in recent years, the government has implemented a series of corporative government legislation, arguably to reduce paternalism. Yet, these laws have had limited or no effect due to the western-like assumptions that were used to formulate them (Redding et al., 2013).

The contemporary Hong Kong economy is mostly based on SMEs which account for 47% of the workforce and 98% of all registered businesses. Remarkably, as is also the case for the company used in this research project, half of these businesses are involved in the import-export trade or wholesale industries (Hong Kong Government Trade and Industry Department, 2014). Based on this description, the company used for this present study would fit into the framework of a typical SME, playing a central role in the Hong Kong economy and business make up. The importance and central role that these SMEs play in the Hong Kong economy has ensured the establishment of a government office designed especially to deal with these types of businesses. The office found within the Hong Kong Government Trade and Industry Department (2014) is called the Support and Consultation Centre for SMEs (SUCCESS) and was formed to provide guidance and support for this type of enterprise in the territory.

Hong Kong Characteristics

Based on the research conducted by Hofstede et al., (1991), Hong Kong scores high in collectivism (75/100), and power distance (68/100). The latter score describes the acceptance of the unequal distribution of power in society among those in less powerful positions such as subordinates, women and children. The former presents a society where the point of reference is the group and not the individual. Moreover, the GLOBE project, developed by a group dedicated to the study of cross cultural leadership, established that the people of Hong Kong score high in the performance-oriented dimension, which can be understood as a positive “can do” attitude among the population in general (Javidan and House, 2001). Based on this, Ng and Ng (2008) have argued that female managers in Hong Kong adopt an “opportunistic strategy”; they constantly look for opportunities to move up within their company, or to other companies to progress in their careers, balancing work-related responsibilities with family commitments.

Several themes emerge when considering these socially inherited features. For example, a Chinese colony under British rule, local cultural characteristics and behaviours based primarily on Confucian philosophy and thinking, and how these affect female managers and their performance. After establishing the general social characteristics of Hong Kong, the following section will focus on a specific aspect: work culture and its relevance to this study. One of the salient features of the Hong Kong working environment is the high number of hours that its citizens work. There is no legislation limiting working hours in the territory and on average, full-time employees work 49 hours a week (Hong Kong Labour Department, 2012).

As women have more domestic responsibilities than men, this has diminished their ability to fulfil domestic roles and place them under increased pressure when performing their formal jobs (Choi and Chen, 2006). This may therefore potentially affect their managerial and

leadership behaviour and capabilities. The next section examines at the employment situation in Hong Kong and the position that the government has taken regarding its social policies.

Education in Hong Kong

Over the years, the Hong Kong government has taken several measures in the field of education that have contributed to the overall social and economic development of the territory, and have benefited women in particular. In traditional China, there was no real need to educate women due to their traditional role as a homemaker, focusing mostly on the upbringing of children (Croll, 2013). However, the changing social arrangements and female role in Hong Kong has led to educational requirements and in 1978, the government introduced legislation, making basic nine-year education compulsory for the entire population. The main beneficiaries of this legislation were women who, at that time, were already established as an integral part of the workforce, mostly working in the manufacturing industry (Hang-yue and Pum, 2009).

As part of the economic and social transformation of Hong Kong during the late 1980s and 1990s, in which its main economic activity shifted from manufacturing to the area of services, the government made a central policy concerning the development of education. The justification for this was that a service economy and a future knowledge-based economy, which forms the strategic direction of the government's plans for future economic development, needs a well-trained, well-educated workforce (Mok, 2003).

Before the shift in government policy in the 1990s, there were only two fully accredited, publicly funded universities in Hong Kong (Hang-yue and Pum, 2009), due to a lack of demand for university graduates within the territory. Yet, from 1991 to 1999, six more publicly funded universities were introduced. In addition, a higher institution focusing on education, not a

university but central to the education system, was also established, increasing the number of publicly funded institutions, in addition to the two private universities that also operate in Hong Kong.

All of these changes, which occurred in less than a decade, provide evidence of how serious the government was about the need for change and the dynamic nature of Hong Kong. These changes in education have had a large impact on the total number of students enrolled at university. The number rose from 44,401 in 1985 to 84,538 in 1998 (Hong Kong Statistics Department, 2014). Once again, women were to take advantage of these changes in education and by 1998, 53% of those enrolled at university were females, overtaking the total number of male students enrolled in higher education in Hong Kong for the first time in history, a trend which remains unchanged (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014). Consequently, a clear male historical advantage towards selection for managerial positions, namely, their higher level of education, has been slowly eroding. Year after year, the education system produces more skilled women who will eventually enter the workforce.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the institutional arrangements in Hong Kong to create an institutional framework for the thesis, and show how these affect society in general and women specifically. As argued in this chapter, Hong Kong has a distinctive social and institutional arrangement making it difficult to define or cluster using western standards. As an economic unit, the territory is a relatively modern invention but historically, it has had the ability to change and transform to develop economic potential. A clear example of this is seen in the way Hong Kong has modernized and created new educational institutions and legislation, which have helped incorporate women into the workforce, first as cheap labour but eventually shifting

to managerial positions. However, some local working customs such as the culture of long working hours may act in detriment to working women who, on the one hand, must attend to their working responsibilities and on the other, must fulfil their domestic role within their families. The inclusion of women in the workforce is an ongoing process which is currently providing women with opportunities to gain managerial positions of power and responsibility. Yet, this process also has social implications based primarily on gender issues, to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Paternalistic leadership in a Chinese Cultural setting

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify the most suitable theory of leadership for the thesis. The chapter starts by presenting the two principal scholarly approaches to conducting research in China, followed by an evaluation of indigenous Chinese leadership theories, which selecting a suitable indigenous Chinese model of leadership: paternalistic leadership. The theory of paternalistic leadership provides a framework for understanding leadership behaviour in a Chinese cultural setting, but also for understanding Chinese organisations. This model is critically evaluated and contextualised in relation to the current study. The second part of this chapter reviews the research developments concerning this model and its current applications.

Researching China

There are several theoretical and practical difficulties that scholars face when conducting research in Chinese cultural settings. These difficulties have been enunciated by, for example, Eckhardt and Bengtsson (2010), Roy et al. (2001) and Stening and Zhang (2007), in articles focusing on the operational problems that emerge when conducting research in China and most of the relevant difficulties of this study are address in the methodology chapter. However, one of the most significant obstacles is the lack of compatibility of western management practices in the East Asia context and a further absence of universal practices within the region (Leung, 2006). Furthermore, a dearth in contextualized explanation and identification of empirical irregularities, in case studies pertaining to international business in general, has been highlighted as an impediment to the comprehension of international business phenomena in Chinese contexts (Tsang, 2013).

This section aims to identify and critically analyse the contributions of indigenous theoretical frameworks. The final objective of this chapter is to single out indigenous theoretical reference points as a basis to develop a postcolonial feminist perspective. Although many studies have been conducted on Chinese leadership, western theories often neglect indigenous contextual factors of Chinese culture (Chen and Farh, 2010). Overall, there is a clear academic supremacy of US approaches to research on leadership and specifically, research on women leaders (Peus et al., 2015). Unfortunately, these theories are often used without local contextualisation.

Chen and Farh (2010) argue that there are only two theories that can be considered Chinese endemic theories: paternalistic leadership and Daoism. As an emergent leadership theory, Daoism has received some academic attention (Chen and Farh, 2010). Daoistic leadership is based on Daoistic philosophy. Dao in itself can mean the "way", "path" or "principle", depending on the context and translation. These principles are presented in the book entitled *Laozi*, which introduces the main ideas of the Taoist philosophy (Lee et al., 2008). The concept of Daoistic leadership has so far led to the development of two theoretical frameworks, which could be used as starting points for further research. The first framework, presented by Lee et al. (2008), identified the five core values of Daoism; namely, altruism, humbleness, flexibility, honesty, and gentleness without forsaking persistency. Based on these Daoist values and their relevance to Chinese culture, a framework for the analysis of leadership behaviours is presented, merging Daoist concepts with leadership principles in a Chinese cultural setting. In an attempt to test the model empirically, Lee and Haught (2012) conducted a quantitative study testing the five mentioned values on a student population with positive results.

Paternalistic leadership, considered the only other endemic leadership theory (Chen and Farh, 2010), is thought of as the most systematically researched and widely applied indigenous Chinese theory used in Chinese cultural settings (Farh and Cheng, 2000; Farh et al., 2006; Farh et al., 2008). The popularity of the theory is perhaps founded in its ability to establish a direct link between this style of leadership, Confucian philosophy and values, and Chinese cultural customs and values. In paternalistic leadership, all of these elements are interrelated, with the theory exposing cultural customs as the link between human relationships and expected behaviour (Pellegini and Scaundra, 2008).

Paternalistic leadership is based on the idea that the willingness among subordinates to follow is reciprocated the care and protection of their leaders, who portray themselves as a paternal authority by displaying loyalty and conformity, in an interdependent relationship (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). The emphasis of the working relationship is placed on the father-like relationships established by the leader, whose expected behaviour and role is to create a family atmosphere in the workplace, to establish close and individualized relationships with subordinates, to be involved in the non-work domain, to demand loyalty and to maintain authority and status. Subordinates are also expected to exhibit certain behaviours such as the acceptance of authority, involvement in non-work domains, loyalty and consideration of the workplace as a family (Aycan, 2006). However, and as its name signifies, the theory focuses heavily on male leaders and is therefore strongly male biased, which demands an investigation of its relevancy to the study of female managers.

After assessing the level of development regarding the most important Chinese indigenous conceptualisation on leadership (Daoist leadership and paternalistic leadership) the

remainder of this chapter will focus on reviewing the literature on Chinese paternalistic leadership critically analysing the contribution that paternalistic leadership makes to the present study. The current review is conducted with the following aim in mind: to develop a theoretical contribution to paternalistic leadership using data generated in a work context predominated by female managers.

Paternalistic leadership

Building on the work of Alves, Manz and Butterfield (2005), who established the link between indigenous philosophy and leadership in China, this section focuses on the further analysis of paternalistic leadership as an indigenous Chinese theory of leadership (Chao and Farh, 2010). Paternalistic leadership, is far more complex than previously considered in western literature which has linked the theory to authoritarianism and developed negative connotations (Aycan, 2006). Paternalism in the West makes no clear distinction between authoritarianism and paternalistic attitudes, as is evident in the conceptualisation presented by Northouse (2012) which describes paternalistic leadership as a “benevolent dictatorship”. However, more recent research has shown that paternalistic leadership is a popular way of leading in many non-western countries (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008; Aycan, 2006; Martinez, 2005). Research conducted in various countries and territories such as: Turkey (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006; Cheng and Wang, 2014), India (Pellegrini et al., 2010), Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Cheng et al., 2014). Across these countries and territories, research has shown that subordinates prefer a more paternalistic style of leadership as it is better adjusted to their cultural context (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006).

Paternalistic leadership has been applied to different leadership roles within the organisation (e.g. owner managers, middle managers (Chao et al., 2010)). However, paternalistic

leadership does not recognise the role of women as leaders or potential leaders; it assumes that leaders are male and in certain conceptualisations, the first born male (Westwood, 1992, 1997). Nevertheless, as discussed in earlier chapters, contemporary society has seen women promoted to managerial roles and gain positions of power. In their new found roles, women quite often lead male subordinates, which presents a clear contradiction to their traditional social role (see chapter 5). This reality leads to the justification and warranting of an investigation, centred on the relevancy and actual application of paternalistic leadership as a framework for the current social environment in Chinese contexts such as Hong Kong.

Confucian values, which are at the root of paternalistic leadership, are still relevant in Hong Kong culture today (Lin and Ho, 2009; Warner, 2010). However, new ideologies (e.g. feminism) with new value systems are also gaining ground, challenging traditional ideas and concepts of Chinese culture and behaviour (Fu and Tsui, 2003), thus demanding the analysis of the theory's relevancy in contemporary Hong Kong society. The following section will review the development of the study of paternalistic leadership in China, its main findings and criticisms.

Development of paternalistic leadership in China

The study of paternalistic leadership has evolved since Silin (1976) opened up the field in the early 1970s, with his research on Taiwanese family businesses and their dynamics. Yet, the theory is still underdeveloped (Chen et al., 2014). Arguably, the most influential review on the topic was produced by Farh and Cheng (2000) at the turn of the millennium, discussing research on Taiwanese family business and its dynamics previously identified in the works of others such as Silin (1976), Redding (1990) and Westwood (1992, 1997), among others.

Farh and Cheng (2000) present a conceptualisation of the theory that forms the basis for the current study. It includes a model of paternalistic leadership as the basis for the theory, the establishment of a relationship between paternalistic leadership and Chinese cultural roots and finally, the establishment of the relationship between leader behaviour and subordinate response. This framework of paternalistic leadership provides a framework for the study of leadership in Chinese cultural settings, but also for understanding culturally Chinese organisations. Yet, as the term “paternalistic” suggests, there is a strong male bias in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, overlooking potential differences between male and female leaders. In addition, “the question to what extent paternalistic leadership generalizes to female leaders is yet to be answered” (Peus et al., 2015: 58).

The development of a theoretical model builds on the ideas and findings of a number of influential researchers in the field including Silin (1976), Redding (1990), Westwood (1992, 1997) and Cheng (1995a, 1995b, 1995c), all of whom lead the research on leadership in Chinese cultural settings. Figure 3 illustrates the major contribution of each of the authors.

Figure 3: Summary of the prominent authors and developments in the study paternalistic leadership

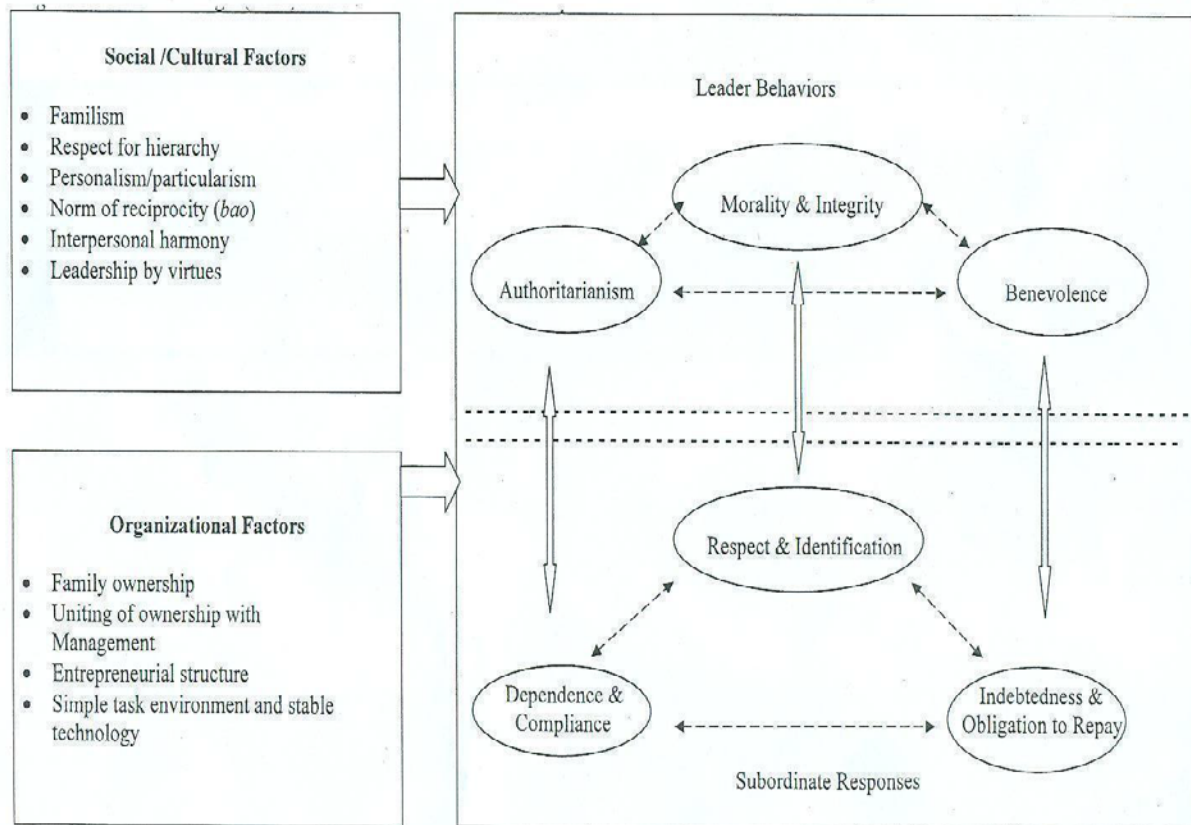
Author	Main Contribution to the study of paternalistic leadership
Silin (1976)	First indigenous study. Characteristics identified: moral leadership, didactic leadership, centralized authority, keeping distance, leaders and situation being vague and diffuse, leadership and subordinate relationship.
Redding (1990)	Benevolent leadership and seven characteristics of paternalistic leadership: Dependency of the subordinates as a mind-set. Personalized loyalty leading to willingness to conform among subordinates. Authoritarianism modified by sensitivity towards subordinates' view. Authoritarianism not divisible among people. Aloofness and social distancing within the hierarchy. Allowance for the leaders' intentions to remain loosely formulated The leaders as exemplars and teachers.
Westwood (1992, 1997)	Headship not leadership. Individualization of the elements of paternalistic leadership.
Cheng (1995a, 1995b, 1995c)	Dynamic between paternalistic leadership and subordinate responses. In-groups and out-groups.
Farh and Cheng (2000)	A theoretical model that unifies the findings of the previous authors, developing the three components of paternalistic leadership, authoritarian, moral and benevolent.

Source: Author's self-elaboration

Returning to the work of Farh and Cheng (2000), their conceptualisation utilises the three previously identified dimensions of paternalistic leadership (see Figure 4 below); namely, morality, authoritarianism and benevolence, as the starting point for their framework, which eloquently presents the arguments that link the different parts of the model to subordinate responses. This is achieved by making historic references to Chinese culture, traditions and customs, and by identifying the similarities and differences to western cultures to explain the

theoretical framework better. This model can be described as a unifier, as it builds on previous knowledge of the subject, explaining and relating paternalistic leadership to Chinese culture.

Figure 4: A preliminary model of paternalistic leadership



Source: Farh and Cheng (2000)

The model presents subordinate responses to each of the behaviours that leaders display, according to the theory of paternalistic leadership. It is assumed that such responses are rooted in traditional Chinese culture. As can be seen from the model, when a leader displays morality, the subordinate should respond with respect and identification; authoritarianism demands dependence and compliance; and finally, benevolence requires the subordinate responses of indebtedness and obligation to repay. Within the model, the authors assign external factors to

leader behaviour such as familism, respect for hierarchy, personalism/particularism, and the norm of reciprocity, interpersonal harmony, and leadership by virtues, establishing a direct link with Chinese traditional culture. In the same way, organisational factors are assigned to the subordinate responses such as family ownership, uniting ownership with management, entrepreneurial structure, and simple task environment and stable technology, providing a social context for the model. The fact that the model not only focuses on leadership behaviour, but also an organisational context, opens up the possibility of utilising the model as a framework for the study of Chinese organisations.

Further empirical research, aimed at testing the model (Chen and Farh, 2010; Chao and Kao, 2005; Cheng et al., 2004) has shown it to be a valid framework for the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership in the Chinese cultural context. However, while the model has been positively received, there are some clear reservations towards the socio-cultural and organisational factors presented. It could be argued that the socio-cultural and organisational factors are the most dynamic part of the model, due to their variability. Some factors may be present in only a limited number of cases; for instance, family ownership may not be relevant in all cases as a large number of enterprises in Mainland China are owned and run by the state. Stable technology is another characteristic that may lack applicability; a dramatic proportion of the current Taiwanese economy is based on the production of components for high-tech devices, an industry deficient in stable technology (Chen and Huang, 2004).

These institutional factors have highlighted an opportunity to test the model of paternalistic leadership, which could lead to an understanding of how different organisational factors impact the overall model. The subsequent section will present the link between the model

of paternalistic leadership presented by Farh and Cheng (2000) and its Chinese cultural roots. Within these cultural roots, there is a large influence from Confucian values which, as stated before, run deep in Hong Kong society (Lin and Ho, 2009; Warner, 2010).

Cultural roots of paternalistic leadership

To conceptualize their model better, Farh and Cheng (2000) present the cultural roots of each of the dimensions of paternalistic leadership: authoritarianism, benevolence and morality. These cultural roots are the social and historical contextualisation of the dimensions, creating the cultural contextual background for the model and its organisational settings, but also linking the conceptualisation to a more archaic view of the role of women in society and therefore, conditioning the conceptualisation towards male leaders and omitting the current role that women play in society.

For the authoritarian leadership dimension, the authors established a link between Chinese culture, which has more than three thousand years of uninterrupted history, and its core social organisation, the family. Within the family, the male figure acts as the head of the group/family, making unchallenged decisions which affect family members' lives just as much as the affairs of the group in general. Moreover, this decision-making relegates women to their traditional role as a follower of the dominating male, a behaviour reinforced by the teachings of Confucius, and its cardinal relationships (discussed in the previous chapter). In all of the aforementioned relationships, there is an expectation that the first person will behave in a directive and authoritarian way. These inequalities in relationships are based on an unequal distribution of power among people (Farh and Cheng, 2000).

It is argued that this class of social organisation also existed in Mediterranean societies at the time of the Greek and Roman Classical cultures. Yet, the power of the head of the family was diluted in those cultures, perhaps due to the influence of Christianity and its monotheistic beliefs. For instance, in Chinese traditional societies, ancestors are worshipped and the head of the family directs the ceremony. In contrast, Christianity or most monotheistic religions in the West delegate this activity to the clergy, creating a special class of people who take care of these responsibilities, consequently, transferring responsibility from the head of the family to outside members (Farh and Cheng, 2000). However, Chinese culture has not been impacted by the influence of other monotheistic religions and therefore, the idea of basing a society on a single unit, as a family with a head father figure who is the sole decision-maker has not been socially challenged by any foreign belief system (Farh and Cheng, 2000).

A further link between authoritarian leadership and Chinese culture can be found in the School of Legalism, a follower of Confucius and one of the most influential philosophical movements in China (Zhou, 2011; Farh and Cheng, 2000). The school advocates the centralization of power by the ruler and the attitude of never trusting or delegating functions to the ministers. The School's popularity lies in its foundations built at a time when China was submerged in civil war, during the Warring States Period (战国时代). This period triggered centralised solutions similar to those presented by the Legalistic School (Zhou, 2011). Based on these ideas, Farh and Cheng (2000) postulate that the Chinese people generalise experiences and habits learnt in the family and apply them to other social groups, engaging in a process of *pan-familism* or *general familism*. As a result, the entire social structures in Chinese society are a reflection of the family and its most relevant characteristics, a clear manifestation of a collectivist society. Chinese people are brought up in families led by sole decision-makers who

do not consult or delegate and are usually male, relegating women to their traditional role as follower. It is therefore only “normal” that any other social structure should reflect this dynamic.

Benevolent leadership is primarily based on two concepts: Human Heartedness (*Ren*), and the Norm of Reciprocity (*Bao*) (Farh and Cheng, 2000). The idea of Human Heartedness, also based on Confucianism, in essence determines that those exerting power, such as fathers, elder brothers, husbands and rulers, should exercise that power displaying benevolence and rightness, among other positive attitudes. Therefore, holding a position of power implies a responsibility to care for the followers (Westwood et al., 2004). Even if those in power do not display the aforementioned human qualities, the subordinated should display loyalty and obedience. Within social interactions, if one party does not behave as expected, this does not liberate the other from fulfilling his/her social role. The norm of reciprocity (*Bao*), alongside *guanxi* (see section: *guanxi*) forms the other main cultural root of benevolent leadership. *Bao* could also explain why Chinese leaders exhibit benevolence towards their subordinates. In Chinese culture, reciprocation is expected in general, but even more so if one party performs a favour for another (Westwood et al., 2004). Therefore, if a leader shows a benevolent attitude towards his/her subordinate, a precedent is established, forcing the subordinate to return what has been done for him/her.

Finally, moral leadership is also based on Confucian philosophy. Confucius advocated the idea that a government be based on virtue, projecting the virtues from the people who were in power to the people who were ruled. The following quotation from the Analects, a compilation of Confucian doctrine, provides a clear example:

He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it. (Confucius 1997: 53)

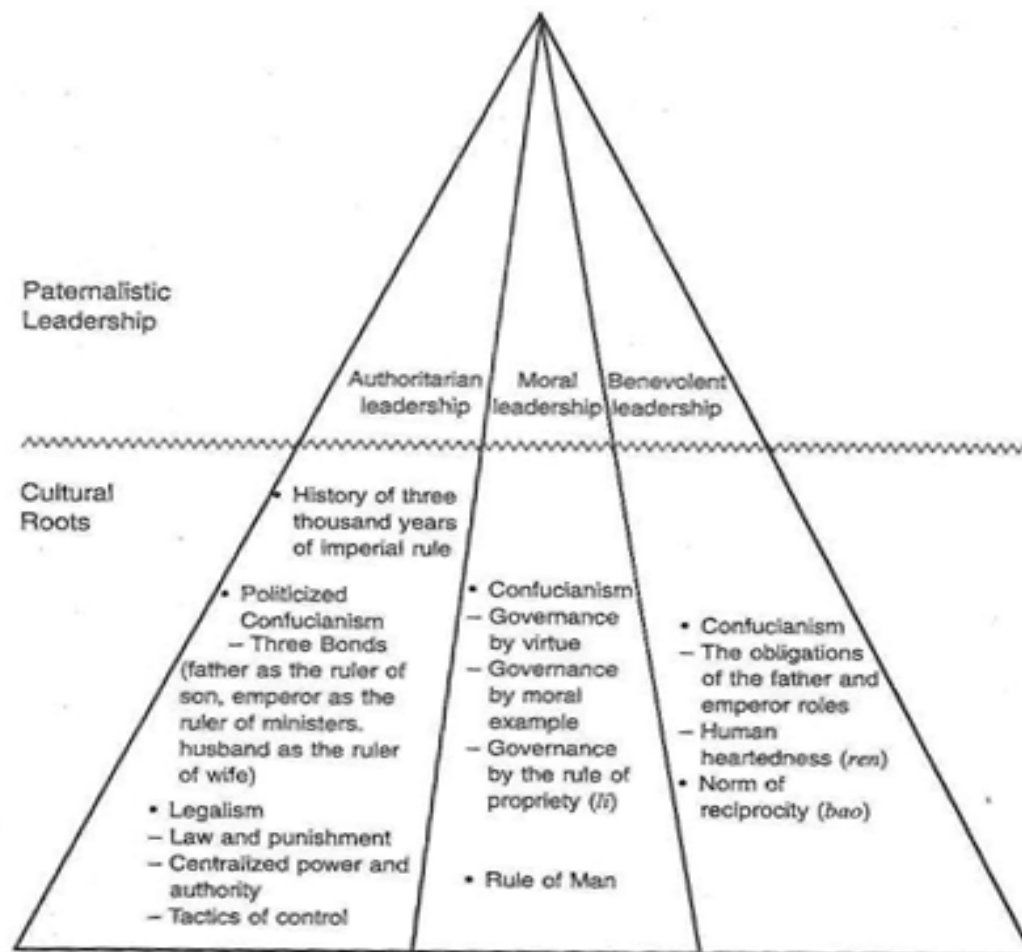
In Chinese culture, there is the social expectation that the government set a moral example and Confucius believed that laws and punishments were insufficient to rule a country. The proper way to rule a country is based on the aforementioned positions: to rule by virtues and by setting a moral example to the ruled. These two ideas permeate further than laws and the threat of punishment, not simply affecting the behaviour of the people, but also their way of thinking (Farh and Cheng, 2000).

Furthermore, until recently, China lacked an established, independent and reliable legal system; justice was traditionally administered by what is called ‘the rule of man’, as opposed to the rule of law found in western countries (Farh and Cheng, 2000). In principle, ‘the rule of man’ describes justice administered by the bureaucrat in power in the territory, aimed at delivering benefits to the ruling class. It was by no means an instrument for delivering fairness across society. Confucius advocated the moral character of those in power, aiming at creating a fairer judiciary system due to this arbitrary distribution of justice in traditional China.

Figure 5 provides a graphical representation of the model and its cultural roots. The entire Chinese version of paternalistic leadership theory takes a pyramidal shape, which is divided into three equal sections, representing each of the three dimensions that comprise the theory: authoritarian, moral and benevolent. The pyramid is divided into two sections, an upper and lower section. In the upper section lie the observable and measurable behaviours of paternalistic leadership, sustained by the lower section, comprised of the less visible cultural roots of the

theory. These roots sustain and give shape to the visible arguments of the theory, whilst also forming the emic components of the Chinese version of paternalistic leadership. Based on these roots, Farh and Cheng (2000) establish links between leader behaviour and subordinate response. The following section will describe the criticisms and limitations of the model, presenting a deeper analysis of its main domains, conceptualisation, and applicability.

Figure 5: Roots of Paternalistic Leadership



Source: Farh and Cheng (2000)

Criticism/limitations of the model

Soon after the model was presented, empirical tests were carried out to evaluate its accuracy, concluding that the model is a viable framework for the study of paternalistic leadership in a Chinese context (Chen and Farh, 2010). Yet, also these tests exposed several problems regarding three dimensions of paternalistic leadership: moral, authoritarian, and benevolent. Problems were also highlighted within the proposed subordinate responses: respect and identification for moral leadership, indebtedness and obligation to repay for benevolence, and dependency and compliance for authoritarian leadership (Wu and Xu, 2012).

Cheng et al. (2004) concluded in their study that it was not possible to find a correlation between authoritarian leadership and compliance, but a significant correlation was established with the other two dimensions: moral, and benevolent. In contrast, a later study (Farh et al., 2006) established a correlation between compliance and authoritarianism, employing fear of the leader as a mediator of this relationship. Additionally, a stronger correlation between benevolent leadership, moral leadership and compliance emerged than for authoritarian leadership and compliance.

For example, Cheng et al. (2002) found that authoritarianism has a negative correlation with morality and benevolence, creating a problem for the entire concept of a leadership style based on these three dimensions. Furthermore, morality and benevolence leaderships have shown positive outcomes regarding subordinate behaviours and attitudes, while authoritarian leadership has failed to produce these positive outcomes (Farh et al., 2008). Based on these problems, Xu and Wu (2012) speculate that there is a possible overlap of psychological mechanisms.

However, Chao et al. (2010) argue for a reconstruction of the concept of authoritarian leadership, based on the Confucian ideal of authoritative leadership, and to rename the authoritarian dimension, “authoritative dimension”. Considering the evidence (presented above), current scholars have concluded that paternalistic leadership is not a unified construct and that each dimension should be considered separately (Farh, 2006; Aycan, 2006; Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008).

In addition to the theoretical problems that the model might have, there is a need to contextualise studies on paternalistic leadership and to highlight that research in the field began more than forty years ago, in highly traditional enterprises. Yet, Chinese societies in general, and in Hong Kong specifically, have undergone extraordinary social changes that have seen the social role of women change progressively. In retrospect, the empirical studies which have led to the establishment of paternalistic leadership as a theory and the model presented by Farh and Cheng (2000) more than ten years ago are extremely male oriented, as Chinese societies were.

Empirical research, the theory and the model have not acknowledged the role that Chinese women might play in leadership, and it is not clear how relevant this conceptualisation is for women (Peus et al., 2014). Consequently, this study seized the opportunity to make a theoretical contribution a contribution based on the evaluation of the relevance of the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership when applied to women in managerial positions in a Chinese cultural context, from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Finally, Smith (2012) and Smith et al. (2012) speculate that paternalistic leadership is culturally related rather than culturally specific to the Chinese context, providing further opportunities to question its relevance.

Paternalistic leader behaviour and subordinate response

Considering subordinate response to be central to the model of paternalistic leadership previously presented (see Figure 6), Farh and Cheng (2000) further develop the theory by including a chart that analyses this relationship in more depth. In the following figures, a subordinate response is presented for each behaviour exhibited by the leaders. For instance, within the authoritarian dimension, even if the leader withholds relevant information displaying an unwillingness to share with subordinates, as is often common practice among paternalistic leaders, subordinates unfalteringly display clear public support for the leader. This is still the case even if quite often, due to information secrecy, subordinates are not really aware of the situation.

For the benevolent dimension, leaders regard employees as family members, not only interacting with them in work related issues, but also showing a holistic concern for their private (non-work related) affairs. As a consequence, the employees sacrifice self-interest in favour of the leader's interests. For example, by helping the leader in private issues, even outside office hours, employees show loyalty retribution.

Finally, within the moral dimension, the leader is expected to act as a moral example and subordinates are expected to internalize these values and apply them to the work and life context. Yet, as highlighted in this chapter, it is not clear that women as managers would display these behaviours and those subordinated will also respond in the same way.

Figure 6: Paternalistic leader behaviour and subordinate response

Original Domain	Subordinates' response
Authoritarian leadership	Authoritarianism
Authority and control Unwilling to delegate. Top-down communication. Information secrecy. Tight control	Compliance Show public support. Avoid public conflict with boss. Avoid expressing dissent.
Image-building Act in a dignified manner. Exhibit high self-confidence. Information manipulation	Obedience Accept leader's directives unconditionally. Loyal to leader. Trust in leader
Didactic behaviour Insist on high performing standards. Reprimand subordinates for poor performance. Provide guidance and instructions for improvements	Respect and fear Show deep respect. Express fear in awe of the leader
Underestimation of subordinate competence Ignore subordinate suggestions. Belittle subordinate contributions	Have a sense of shame Be willing to confess mistakes. Take leader's interventions seriously. Correct mistakes and improve
Benevolent leadership	Benevolent leadership
Individualize care Treat employees as family members. Provide job security. Assist during personal crisis. Show holistic concern. Avoid embarrassing subordinates in public. Protect even grave errors of subordinates. Leave room even in extreme cases	Show gratitude Never forget leader's favours; strive to reciprocate. Sacrifice self-interest for leaders. Take assignments seriously. Meet leader's expectations. Work diligently
Moral leadership	Leader morality and integrity
Unselfishness Reject egocentric impulses for a higher moral good. Put collective interest ahead of personal interest. Adhere personality to rules of proper and virtuous behaviour	Identification Identify with leader's values and goals. Internalize leader's values
Lead by example Act as a role model in work and personal life. Demonstrate financial and commercial success	Modelling Imitate leader's behaviour

Source: Farh and Cheng (2000)

Review of paternalistic leadership domains

Farh et al. (2008) conducted an empirical examination of the theory of paternalistic leadership and focused their analysis on the three main domains that are the basis for the theory (Cheng et al., 2009). This review of domains is an update and improvement of the original model of paternalistic leadership (Chao et al., 2010; Wu and Xu, 2012; Wang and Cheng, 2010A; Niu et al., 2009). The authors present an updated version of the domains, more suitable for the current Chinese environment. Farh et al. (2008) start their analysis from the original domains presented in Farh and Cheng (2000): authoritarian, benevolent, and moral leadership, reviewing and updating each in turn.

Considering the dynamism of Chinese society, in addition to the fact that the current study is based on a sample which differs to the demographic characteristics of the sample used by Farh et al. (2008), this research project aims at establishing the relevancy of these three dimensions and their updated content to female leaders in Hong Kong. The developments presented by the authors belong to each dimension of paternalistic leadership and are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Within authoritarian leadership, the change from image building has been modified to reputation building, the former being general and broad and lacking substantiation by actions or facts. In contrast, when the leader aims at building a reputation, as in the revised domain, the reputation must be built on actions and facts. This modification transfers emphasis from an image, which is rather static, to a reputation requiring actions and accomplishments.

Job security is present in both the old and new domains of benevolent leadership, but new elements instilling greater importance on the concept of job security have been added. These new

elements are: (1) concern about career development and the provision of feedback; (2) coaching and mentoring. These two new elements highlight concern among leaders regarding employment provision and the higher needs of employees, which are met by developing their skills, supporting them professionally and a general acknowledgement of their professional career. Finally, the modification of the moral dimension provides a more precise view of behaviour displayed by the leader. These revised elements are: personal integrity, honesty or keeping promises, self-discipline and kindness.

Figure 7: Revised constructed domain of paternalistic leadership

Original Domain	Revised Domain
Authoritarian leadership	
Authority and control: Unwilling to delegate. Top-down communication. Information secrecy. Tight control	Authority and control: Expect obedience. Insist on making final decisions on key issues. Guard key information tightly. Tight control
Image-building: Act in a dignified manner. Exhibit high self-confidence. Information manipulation	Reputation-building: Act in a dignified manner. Exhibit high self-confidence
Didactic behaviour: Insist on high performing standards. Reprimand subordinates for poor performance. Provide guidance and instructions for improvements	Strict discipline: Insist on high performance standards. Do not tolerate low performance. Do not compromise on core company values. Apply strict discipline
Underestimation of subordinate competence: Ignore subordinate suggestions. Belittle subordinate contributions	
Benevolent leadership	
Individualize care: Treat employees as family members. Provide job security. Assist during personal crisis. Show holistic concern. Avoid embarrassing subordinates in public. Protect even grave errors of subordinates. Leave room even in extreme cases	Individualize care in non-work domain: Treat employees as family members. Assist during personal crises. Show holistic concern. Avoid embarrassing subordinates in public. Individualized care in work domain. Concern about career development. Provide feedback, coaching and mentoring. Provide job security. Allow opportunities for correcting mistakes
Moral leadership	
Unselfishness: Reject egocentric impulses for a higher moral good. Put collective interest ahead of personal interest. Adhere personality to rules of proper and virtuous behaviour	Unselfishness: Do not abuse authority for personal gain. Do not mix personal interest with business interest. Put collective interest ahead of personal interest
Lead by example: Act as a role model in work and personal life. Demonstrate financial and commercial success	Job devotion: Competent for the job. Lead by example. Treat people fairly. Act responsibly
	Personal integrity: Honesty; keeping promises, self-discipline, kindness

Source: Farh et al. (2008)

Empirical research

Since the establishment of the model of paternalistic leadership, a large number of empirical studies have been conducted, aimed at testing and gaining a better understanding of the theory. For instance, positive outcomes have been linked to the moral and benevolent dimensions, and these outcomes are: a satisfactory evaluation of the leaders (Chao and Kao, 2005; Cheng et al., 2000; Cheng et al., 2004; Farh et al., 2006); commitment to leaders and organisations (Aryee et al., 2007; Farh et al., 2006); job performance, organisational citizen behaviour (Cheng et al., 2002b; Cheng et al., 2004; Farh et al., 2006; Liang et al., 2007); and employees voice (Chan, 2014; Zhang et al. 2014).

Notably, Wu et al. (2002), using the model of Farh and Cheng (2000), have advanced knowledge by adding behavioural measures and testing them. Their findings identified fear as a mediator between authoritarian leadership and organisational citizenship behaviours towards organisation (OCBO) in the Chinese cultural context.

Researchers have also identified some moderators of paternalistic leadership; for instance, Cheng et al. (2004) established that based on the rapid modernization of China, not all Chinese people hold the same degree of traditional Chinese values. As some people hold fewer traditional views due to foreign influences, they consequently react less favourably to paternalistic leadership in general and to its authoritarian dimension in particular (see Effectiveness of paternalistic leadership, in the following section, for a more detailed description).

The review of empirical research on paternalistic leadership in the Chinese cultural context provides evidence of wide acceptance of the model presented by Farh and Cheng (2000) among the scholarly community. Moreover, empirical testing and developments show how the

model has not only been accepted, but also utilised as the basis for further research. Yet, the extent of the research also evidences the fact that paternalistic leadership is the current dominant conceptualisation, providing a “template” for the expected behaviour of culturally Chinese managers. However, it makes no distinction between genders and it assumes that women in managerial positions fit into the same expected leadership behaviour as men.

Effectiveness of paternalistic leadership

Remarkably, the degree of traditionalism expressed by the subordinates of the leader has been noted as having a direct impact on the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership (Farh et al., 1997; Farh et al., 2007; Xie et al., 2008; Hui et al., 2004). Considering the rapid transformation and economic development of the region during the last three decades, coupled with large regional differences in the realms of economic development, education and exposure to western values, it cannot be assumed that all culturally Chinese people react homogeneously to paternalistic leadership. Chao and Farh (2010) have expressed that the degree of traditionality of the person (how closely traditional Chinese values and beliefs are followed and displayed) has a direct impact on his/her response to paternalistic leadership. The authors reveal that more traditional Chinese people display a more positive reaction to paternalistic leadership, consequently increasing the relevance of a cultural context to the study of paternalistic leadership in China. Thus, the use of the Chinese version of paternalistic leadership to establish the degree of traditionality of the sample population is necessary when conducting any study in a Chinese cultural context, as the degree of traditionality will be decisive in the effectiveness of the theory.

Paternalistic leadership and *guanxi*

Chen and Chen (2004) define *guanxi* as an indigenous Chinese phenomenon in which two individuals develop a long-term relationship to exchange mutual personal favours for the benefit of one or both parties. Yet, these favours are not always legal or moral. As gift giving in Chinese culture exemplifies, quite often there is a very fine line between bribery and *guanxi* (Nie and Lämsä, 2013). Regarding leadership, *guanxi* is viewed as a complement to the study of leadership in China, aiding scholarly understanding of the relationship between leaders and followers and the equality (or inequality) to be found there (Chao et al., 2010).

Paternalistic leadership studies in Hong Kong

Regarding paternalistic leadership in Hong Kong, the work of Sheer (2010, 2012) has led to questioning its relevance in the territory. The author found inconsistent correlations for the three dimensions within a Hong Kong sample, a previously stated inconsistency identified in studies conducted in other countries/territories. Yet these concerns are still relevant, especially when taking into account the British influence in Hong Kong and the social and political differences when compared with other cultural Chinese societies.

Western management influences in Hong Kong

Even though paternalistic leadership is still relevant in Hong Kong, the territory has also been exposed to other management influences which demand attention. Starting in the early 1980s and becoming more prominent in the 1990s, Hong Kong employers began to implement a number of western management practices, the most prominent being the introduction of flexible workers (Ng and Ip, 2000). This varies from the core concept of paternalistic leadership: a stable job. Additionally, remuneration began to change with some institutions introducing performance related pay and bonuses and other measures of performance evaluation, differing from the focus

of loyalty over performance in paternalistic leadership. These changes were primarily motivated by the labour shortage in Hong Kong at that time (Ng and Ip, 2000). This labour shortage also encouraged Hong Kong to look for workers elsewhere and import labour, leading to a more open society (Sek-hong and Lee, 1998) and consequently, new labour/social issues started to emerge. Ng and Ip (2000) specifically attribute the movement advocating gender equality in Hong Kong to globalization and the foreign influences that this had brought to the territory.

The aforementioned influences on management and human resources in Hong Kong, in addition to the British colonial influence and social changes, have led some authors to consider Hong Kong a “hybrid” management system (Priem et al., 2000; Jackson, 2002, 2011). This perspective of management in Hong Kong as a hybrid phenomenon reinforces the need to explore the relevance of paternalistic leadership in the Hong Kong context, a context where traditional Chinese values have been influenced by foreign ideas.

Hong Kong as modern Chinese society

Hong Kong, perhaps due to its colonial past, is arguably the most advance and liberal of all Chinese cultural societies (Warner, 2010; UN International Human Development Indicators, 2015). The contemporary phenomenon of female inclusion in the workforce in Mainland China appeared in Hong Kong during industrialisation in the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, as Mainland China currently expands its industrial base, Hong Kong has already transferred its economy to professional services (Hong Kong Government Trade and Industry Department, 2014). Based on this, it could be argued that Hong Kong can predict further developments that may take place in other Chinese cultural societies.

The social role of women within Hong Kong society has been in a process of change in recent years, relative to their new role as managers. A better understanding of how this affects paternalistic leadership can provide insights into the future of leadership in other culturally Chinese societies.

Essentialism and limitations

The current review of the indigenous literature on leadership in Chinese cultural settings presents paternalistic leadership as the most important conceptualisation of leadership, from an indigenous perspective (Farh and Cheng, 2000; Farh et al., 2006; Farh et al., 2008). Consequently, in establishing paternalistic leadership as the dominant indigenous leadership conceptualisation and a benchmark for the expected Chinese leadership behaviour, unfortunately, the idea that Chinese cultural societies can all fit into a model of expected behaviour is an oversimplification of a complex social phenomenon. This oversimplification has been heavily criticised by scholars who adhere to postcolonial views. Postcolonial writers criticised the idea that entire cultures can be summarised into conceptualisations and models, as this practice essentialises diverse social characteristic and oversimplifies social complexity (Westwood, 2004, 2006), presenting as an end product, binary categories of behaviours into which people do/not fit. This approach limits in-depth understandings of the societies under study (Prasad, 2003; Bjerregaard et al., 2009). Because of this, within this study, paternalistic leadership is understood to be a point of departure for the analysis of the female managers. This approach can be considered as strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1988), understanding that essentialism is an oversimplification that presents a distorted picture of the realities of the participants, but also that it can bring communality to the participants and aid in understanding the phenomena. Therefore, strategic essentialism is considered important and deployed in this case by utilising an

essentialised framework to start discussing leadership and leadership expectations in the current cultural setting.

In addition to the limitation of essentialising human behaviour, paternalistic leadership is biased towards men and struggles to account for the new roles that women play in modern Chinese organisations and society. This bias has been exposed earlier in this chapter, where the link between paternalistic leadership and traditional Chinese cultural concepts are presented, but also, as used to be the case in traditional Chinese society, women are relegated to secondary, non-leading roles in Chinese societies. This secondary, non-leading role of women in Chinese societies might have been accurate in the past when women were not educated or integrated into the formal workforce. Yet, it is not relevant in the present, now that women have moved to more prominent roles in society, as argued in chapter 1. Therefore, this creates a demand for a new analysis and understanding of their behaviour in leading roles.

Based on this postcolonial critique, which is further developed in the coming chapter, in addition to the limitations that the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership imposes on women, this thesis aims to use paternalistic leadership as a starting point for understanding how women lead in the current case study. It also incorporates new conceptualisations that might emerge from the data collected.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter presented the two main approaches to the creation of knowledge in the field of management in China. This was followed by the introduction of two of the most prominent indigenous Chinese theories of leadership, ultimately finding paternalistic leadership and the model presented by Farh and Cheng (2000) as the most appropriate for the

current research project, not only for the understanding of managerial behaviours, but also for the analysis of the organisation where these behaviours occurred. Yet, this conceptualisation is not without limitations. Criticisms of the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership and Farh and Cheng's (2000) model have been discussed. At this point, it must be noted that the selection of the model does not equate to its overall applicability. As is evident from its limitations, this model is just a starting reference point for the current study. Inherent male orientation does not account for females in positions of power and leadership, and this criticism is a key driver of the study presented.

The second part of the chapter focused on the research and findings that have been obtained, utilising paternalistic leadership as a theoretical framework, including: mediators, moderators' outcomes and issues concerning its effectiveness. These empirical findings demonstrate the application of the theory within the scholarly community, subsequently providing the theory with empirical validation. Furthermore, the lack of empirical testing which takes into account gender differences highlights a current gap in the literature. Whilst the theory enjoys a history of research and testing, this could also signify a mature stage of development and a need to reconceptualise the theory in a society where females play a more prominent role and, consequently, providing this study with an opportunity to present a valuable theoretical contribution.

Until now, paternalistic leadership has been established as the dominant and most relevant Chinese indigenous theory of management. Its importance relates not only to Chinese people, but also to foreign companies doing business in China. The theory has provided explanations to foreign managers regarding the expectations of Chinese subordinates, as well as

insights for non-Chinese subordinates, allowing them knowledge of what they may expect from their Chinese leaders. However, and as previously noted with this or any other theory, there is a tendency to essentialise social behaviours. Furthermore, the theory does not account for the fact that an increasing number of Chinese women are being promoted to managerial positions, positions which challenge their traditional role in society. Unfortunately, it is not clear how these two phenomena, the traditional female role in Chinese society and the paternalistic style of leadership, influence each other and affect the management style of female managers in modern, culturally Chinese societies.

Chapter 3

Gender in a Chinese cultural setting

Introduction

Research focusing primarily on female managers must include both gender and leadership theories to contextualise the phenomena in question. This chapter aims to provide this contextualisation and to identify a suitable theoretical perspective to gain an understanding from an indigenous Chinese viewpoint, avoiding, to the largest possible extent, any western bias (as previously discussed in Chapter 2). The chapter provides a social, economic and historical contextualisation by reviewing feminist movements in China, the traditional female role in Chinese society and women in the Hong Kong workforce. Gender legislation and its impact on Hong Kong society is evaluated before focusing on female leadership research in Chinese contexts and finally, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the current situation that female managers face in Hong Kong.

Postcolonial feminism

As previously presented, this research takes an ideological stance based on the idea that Chinese culture is unique and distinct from the West. Whilst it is acknowledged that cultures share etic elements, distinctions must be made for Chinese studies. As with leadership, gender studies have developed many theoretical perspectives, with most originating in the West. The three principal strands of feminist theory in the West are liberal feminism, radical feminism, and Marxist and socialist feminism (Hines, 2008). These feminist theories can be critiqued for the western bias in conceptualisations of the roles and expected roles of women in societies (Mohanty, 2003). For instance Mohanty (1984), criticises western feminism in its understanding of non-western women for their assumption that all of us of the same gender, across class and

cultures, are somehow socially constructed as a homogeneous group therefore, the discursively consensual homogeneity of “women” as a group is a mistake. In addition Monhaty, (1984) also argues that western bias of feminist issues views first world women as subject of their studies but third world women as an object.

In contrast, postcolonial feminism has been identified as an approach that critiques western feminist movements for the generalisation and transferral of western feminist issues in non-western cultural settings (Reed, 2008). This criticism of western gender theories addresses a direct concern of the current study, as it attempts to avoid the imposition of western-created ideas and concepts.

Postcolonial feminism originates from conceptualisations that emerged out of postcolonial theory which attempts to expose and remove the hegemonic position of western knowledge structures, which are quite often imposed on non-western cultural settings (Park and Sunder-Rajan, 2000). The theoretical principles used for achieving this are based on stressing the deficiencies of western perspectives when addressing non-western cultures, and as one of many theoretical perspectives (Westwood and Jack, 2007). It must be noted that whilst the prefix of ‘post’ could insinuate a time or space after colonialism, postcolonial studies do not assume these power relationships have ended. Even though formal colonial domination has drawn to a close, the power relationships formed still play an influential role in former colonies (Westwood and Jack, 2007). This observation may be applied to Hong Kong due to the territory’s position as a British colony and now arguably a Chinese colony (Fenby 2008; Vines, 1998). This dual colonial perspective has deep implications, and research on Hong Kong should consider the power relationships and influences of not only Great Britain but also Mainland China. Therefore, issues

of patriarchy and imperial influence (western and Chinese) are discussed and considered throughout the thesis.

Arguably, postcolonial theory started with the work of Said (1978) who introduced the concept of orientalism, the idea that the western self is constructed and defined as opposite to the oriental Other. In Said's case, this was how people living in colonies were created as other to their colonial masters. This idea was previously presented in a feminist but not postcolonial context by Simone De Beauvoir (1949) who introduced the idea that female identity is defined as the opposite to male identity. The idea that females may construct their identity as an Other could also be applied to the current case study. Here, female managers may construct their managerial self as Other to non-managerial women or traditional women on the one hand, but also to men in managerial positions on the other. Based on this, this thesis explores how female managers construct their managerial self in relation to the two dominant conceptualisations previously stated.

However, even if postcolonial feminism draws on concepts from postcolonial theory, postcolonial feminism cannot be understood as a subset of postcolonial theory in general, or as simply another feminist perspective (Park and Sunder-Rajan, 2000). As stated by Park and Sunder-Rajan, "postcolonial feminism is an exploration of and at the intersections of colonialism and neo-colonialism with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in the different contexts of women's lives, their subjectivities, work, sexuality, and rights" (2000: 53).

Postcolonial feminism is far from unified (Mills, 1998), and the current project only applies some of its vast concepts. In any case, postcolonial studies are concerned about hegemonic ideologies; ideologies which actually construct the idea of "normal" and "acceptable",

and also create the idea of what the entire society should aspire to (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). Currently, the hegemonic conceptualisation regarding indigenous theories on leadership in a Chinese cultural setting is based on the most popular and researched theory, paternalistic leadership, as it sets the standards of what is “normal” and “acceptable” for cultural Chinese leaders and what they should aspire to become. However, in the current context, the traditional role of women in Chinese society can also be viewed as another dominant conceptualisation. This conceptualisation focuses on what is socially expected from women in society.

Additionally, a postcolonial feminist approach not only focuses on specific social factors to understand a phenomenon, but also aims to conduct a holistic analysis of how inequalities have been presented from a historical, political, social, cultural, and economic perspective (Racine, 2011). This holistic approach is in agreement with the aims and objectives of the current study, a multilevel study of female managers in Hong Kong which analyses different social factors from an indigenous perspective. Furthermore, postcolonial feminism views western scholarship as highly biased and advocates the use of indigenous theories as well as giving those researched a voice (Ashcroft et al., 2006; Reed, 2008). In this case, the female managerial voices will be contextualised within a theoretical framework that has at its core indigenous perspectives.

Postcolonial feminism aims at addressing the issue of power imbalance and patriarchal hegemony and its relevance to women (Racine, 2011; Reed, 2008), which highlights the significance of its relationship with paternalistic leadership, a distinctively male-biased theory. This bias is a reflection of the development of the paternalistic leadership within a strong patriarchal cultural setting (Westwood 1992, 1997), yet one that demands readdressing in

contemporary Hong Kong. The issue of gendered power and its relationship to patriarchal societies is directly linked to the expected role of women in Chinese societies, used for more than a century as an instrument for control and domination (Lee, 2005). Yet, it is argued that liberation is not a concern among these women, most Hong Kong women having indicated that they are satisfied with their professional career and family life, showing an acceptance of their role in society (Lo et al., 2003).

Chinese women, as members of the Chinese cultural community, strive for harmony and social acceptance, and avoid conflict (Cheung et al., 2010). Chinese culture demands a harmonious environment and the avoidance of confrontation. This demand, in the context of a patriarchal society where the female role involves emotional care giving and chores, might shape an environment where women lack the opportunity to challenge their social role. Furthermore, women accept and fulfil multiple roles, especially those who aspire to a professional career. Because of the singularity of this and any other cultural context, this work agrees with the issues raised by Mohanty (1984), who is critical of western feminist movements that create a homogenous monolithic woman category viewing all women, including non-western women as a homogenous entity. Each woman in the current study is the owner of a unique story and there is therefore a need to understand the singularities of each participant from a critical theory perspective.

Moreover, an exploration of the construction of female leadership must consider what is expected of a leader in a Chinese cultural context, in addition to the influence of the traditional role of women in Chinese societies where women's expected social behaviour is defined and female leadership is not supported. This exploration will also include institutional and

organisational representations of these women. The negotiation of how other and self are constructed and co-constructed could potentially lead to what Bhabha (1994) has conceptualised as a “hybrid identity” and in the case of organisations, a cultural “third space”, the unique space where the organisational dynamics occurred. In this hybridity, the consequence of identities emerges from relational processes of two opposites (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008).

Chinese female managers must negotiate the expectation of how women should behave in their traditional role and their leadership within the constraints of the model of paternalistic leadership. In this chapter, special attention will be placed on the presence and/or relevance of the postcolonial concept of mimicry, the act of imitating the behaviours prescribed by a dominant conceptualisation (Frenkel, 2008). In this case, conceptualisation on paternalistic leadership and the traditional role of women in Chinese societies. Yet , these conceptualisations are used in line with Strategic essentialism (Spivak,1988), where the limitations of essentialising practices are acknowledged and these conceptualisations are not used to define the participants, but as a reference point for the analysis of their individual, singular realities.

Other studies have been conducted on Gender, and women in Hong Kong from a postcolonial perspective, for instance Wing-yee Lee (1996) published an edited book, where among many other topics, the challenges of a patriarchal society, the female identity and postcolonialism, Hong Kong are explicitly discussed. This book aims at understanding how the aforementioned factors (among others) have been both obstacles and opportunities for women’s liberation. Equally interesting is the contribution made from Lim (2015), who studies feminism and the feminist movement in postcolonial Hong Kong, demonstrating the relevance of the postcolonial legacy on feminism in Hong Kong.

Finally, as stated earlier, this thesis aims to challenge the dominant conceptualisation in indigenous Chinese leadership theory, paternalistic leadership, a conceptualisation that has long ignored the role of women in Chinese cultural societies in a leadership position. A postcolonial feminist lens not only accounts for the leadership perspective, but also includes a feminist perspective, challenging its hegemonic conceptualisation.

The feminist movements in China and Hong Kong

The study of feminist issues, together with feminist movements, or social issues from a female perspective in China, can be divided into three key stages. The first stage started in the early 20th century with the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Republic. During these years, China opened itself to western ideas and embraced, among other factors, feminist notions and theories. The main ideas during this period were centred on understanding and questioning the role of women in society. This rather short period drew to a close in the mid-1920s when China entered civil war and much of its openness to foreign ideas was lost (Chen and Cheung, 2011).

Hong Kong, specifically, saw the first wave of local feminism start to take shape following the end of the Second World War and this lasted until the late 1970's. Within this period, the main focus was to eradicate polygamy, an extremely common practice in Hong Kong at the time, and to address general gender equality issues such as "equal pay for equal work", which was relatively successful, especially in the New Territories (Tam and Yip, 2009). In the early 1980s, Hong Kong observed a second stage of feminism, characterized by a significant increase in the number of pressure groups dedicated to problems framed as feminist issues such as domestic violence, reproductive rights and gender awareness, among others. Due to pressure from these groups during the 1990s, first the colonial government and then the local Beijing

approved Hong Kong government started to pass legislation aimed at providing a legal framework for gender equality in Hong Kong (Chiang, and Liu, 2011) (for a more detailed analysis of the legislation, see the section: Gender equality legislation and institutions in Hong Kong in this chapter).

While feminist thought has been recently embraced within Hong Kong, it may be critiqued for borrowing western ideas. Wing-yee Lee (1996) attributes the ineffectiveness of antidiscrimination legislation in Hong Kong to the borrowing of the legislation from western countries and poor contextualisation. In spite of this focus, only a limited number of studies have considered the new roles women undertake as leaders in many Chinese enterprises (for a more detailed analysis of these studies, see the corresponding section on leadership in China).

To understand the experiences of female managers better, and in agreement with the views of postcolonial feminism, the following section will present the philosophical and social views of Chinese women in Chinese societies. This section provides a way to contextualise the roles and expectations of ethnic Chinese female managers from their own perspective.

Traditional female roles in China

To understand relationships and distributions of power in Hong Kong better, a consideration of Chinese society traditionally based on power distance and influenced by basic aspects of Confucian philosophy is imperative. Confucius' philosophical works are central pillars of Chinese ethics and etiquette (Bond and Hwang, 1986). Therefore, the central aim of this section is to present human relations in Chinese cultural contexts as dictated by Confucianism, and to provide a cultural framework of human relationships to anchor the expected behaviour of women in Chinese societies.

Those unfamiliar with Chinese culture might question the relevance of these relationships in a modern Chinese cultural setting. Yet, it is clear that traditional gender roles in Hong Kong are still relevant today and are often used to discriminate against women in the workplace (Schnurr and Mak, 2012). Furthermore, in accordance with postcolonialism and to contextualise these relationships in contemporary society better, it is pertinent that these relationships are understood. These relationships are not only relevant to Chinese culture because of the prevalence of Confucianism as a belief system, but also because “Chinese identity is primarily defined by role-based social relations rather than clear category boundaries” (Liu et al., 2010: 580).

The core of human relations in Chinese cultural contexts, including Hong Kong, is based on five cardinal social relationships (五倫 *Wǔlún*). These relationships are: ruler and subject (君臣); father and son (父子); husband and wife (夫婦); elder and younger brother (兄弟); and friend and friend (朋友). Confucius assigned specific duties and responsibilities to each of the people mentioned within these relationships. Moreover, Confucius imposed the rules for correct behaviour and righteousness; these rules stress the need to respect order, age, gender and hierarchies, consequently setting the tone for a society that scores high in power distance (Tang et al., 2010). Notably, out of the five cardinal relationships, the first four establish an unequal distribution of power, in which the first person has a greater level of power and control. The only relationship made of equals named by Confucianism is friend and friend. Additionally, among the five relationships, power is always held by the male.

These relationships are comparable to the relationship between managers and subordinates in a modern culturally Chinese enterprise, which predominantly consists of vertical

management structures. Based on this unequal distribution of power, females have been ascribed a secondary status in Chinese societies. Due to Confucian philosophy and its relevance in Chinese culture, women are presumed to be born inferior to men, a condition that influences their role in society as well as their entire career and personal development (Xian and Woodhams, 2008). In a quantitative study, Lin and Ho (2009) show that Confucian values are still largely accepted and applicable, especially in Hong Kong and Taiwan, but less by the young people of Mainland China. The acceptance and relevance of Confucian values in Hong Kong reproduces a restrictive gender binary, where male and female roles are well defined and accepted as mutually exclusive. This binary segregation of genders is theoretically based on the concept of Yin and Yang, where genders are presented as opposites with distinctive characteristics, yet in need of each other (Faure and Fang, 2008). The acceptance of male and female identities and roles based on Confucian values and Yin and Yang creates a restrictive paradigm, based on a binary logic limiting the capacities of men and women to perform different social roles.

Traditionally, the woman's place has been in the home (Schnurr and Mak, 2012) and the man was the head of the family. This is highlighted in the framework of paternalistic leadership (Westwood, 1992, 1997). Men were the breadwinners and decision-makers, presenting the picture of a strong patriarchal social arraignment (Tang et al., 2010). Male social behaviour was expected to be led by the following Confucian virtues: *Ren* (仁) which is the positive feeling that follows altruistic acts; *Yi* (义/義) which is a moral inclination to do good; and *Li* (禮) which is the proper way a person should behave. In contrast, the traditional female role was limited to the boundaries of the home, taking care of the upbringing of the children and the elderly. On the rare occasions that women worked outside the home, it was often in the home of another as a cook or

domestic worker. Confucianism established that female behaviour should be based on "Three Obediences and Four Virtues for Women", *sancongshi de* (未嫁从父), which are: obey her father as a daughter; (未嫁从父) obey her husband as a wife; (既嫁从夫) obey her sons in widowhood; (夫死从子) morality; (妇德) proper speech; (妇言) modest manner (妇容); and diligent work (妇功) (Tang et al., 2010). In essence, the first set of obediences provides the hierarchy of males to be obeyed and the latter four are virtues that Confucius considers appropriate for females (Leung, 2003).

As previously stated, Confucius' views and philosophy are highly relevant in contemporary Hong Kong and Taiwan. Yet, its prominence has decreased in Mainland China to a certain extent, especially among the younger generations (Lin and Ho, 2009; Warner, 2010). However, it remains unclear how contemporary female managers are affected in their professional functions by traditional stereotypes, or how they respond to this situation.

The theory of paternalistic leadership (discussed in Chapter 2) was mostly developed to explain leadership in Chinese contexts: contexts where traditionally, only males were leaders and women had no formal positions of power (Tang et al., 2010). Nevertheless, Chinese societies have undergone remarkable changes in social structures and currently face groups of well-educated women moving into managerial positions, positions where leadership is required and where gendered power relations and politics also play a role. However, how these traditional views on leadership and the traditional female role of women in society affect women who are entering managerial positions in Chinese cultural contexts still lacks clarity.

Women in the workforce

A strong Confucian influence and its patriarchal family system remained intact in Hong Kong until the Second World War. Under this system, women followed the directives of their fathers, husbands and sons. Polygamy was still common and women did not engage in paid work but were primarily tasked with domestic duties (Jaschok and Miers, 1994). Important social changes started to take shape and influence the role women played in the Hong Kong workforce during the 1960s and 1970s. These social changes were predominantly based on the overall increase of the population of the colony, due mostly to the inflow of migrants from Mainland China and an increase in the birth rate of the territory (Salaff, 1995). Yet, this trend slowed down by the early 1980s (Hong Kong Government Statistics, 2014).

In the 1980s, Hong Kong started to experience a period of industrialization, based on the export of manufactured products to overseas markets. These new industries incorporated a large number of women into the economically active population of the territory, primarily as cheap labour. Women have been preferred for certain types of manufacturing jobs due to higher manual ability than their male counterparts. The women involved in these types of jobs have been named “working daughters”, due to their young ages (Salaff, 1995). This process of actively engaging in economic life did not equate to female emancipation; traditional patriarchal families were still the norm in society. The increase in working women was mainly due to the financial needs of their families, thereby reinforcing the patriarchal structure. Moreover, women remained largely absent from managerial positions (Lee, 2005).

The role of women in Hong Kong society has been gradually changing, shaped by alterations in the local economy, affording women a new social role. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Hong Kong economy shifted from being industry based to service based. Following this

trend, the number of women working in the diminishing manufacturing enterprises began to decrease, as those taking up roles in the service industry increased (Lee, 2005). Nonetheless, traditional gender roles as part of marriage have remained largely unchanged; women are still expected to perform household chores, reinforcing a patriarchal social arrangement (Bu and McKeen, 2000).

Additionally, family demands cause more stress for women than they do for their male counterparts (Choi and Chen, 2006). Women in Hong Kong are family oriented and spend a significant amount of time on domestic chores, even if they have a professional career (Lo, 2003). Consequently, there is a clear need for a much better work-family balance in Chinese societies, especially among young professionals (Coffey et al., 2009).

Gendered social changes are evidenced by statistics in Hong Kong society. Women are now more likely to be promoted to managerial positions, but they are also getting married later. For instance, the average female marital age in 1981 was 24, yet by 2006 it had risen to 28 (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014). Additionally, feminine matriculation rates in higher education have risen and fertility rates have dropped (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014). These changes have diminished the importance of the extended family and given a new dimension to the smaller nuclear family. However, patriarchal institutions remain intact in various parts of society (Ng and Fosh, 2004).

Regarding the gender income gap, Tai (2013) argued that in the current service oriented economy that dominates Hong Kong, women have the possibility to earn higher salaries than men in certain sectors such as transport, storage and communication industries. Moreover,

similar wages can be gained by both men and women in areas such as business services in general, or in insurance. Most remarkably, within the financial industries, women gain 27% more pay than their male counterparts. Yet, astoundingly, the only industry with a male-biased income gap is manufacturing, where women are paid 91% of the male salary. These statistics highlight how a service economy with more jobs that are not traditionally allocated to men has provided females in Hong Kong the opportunity to earn the same and sometimes even more than men. This claim is in direct contrast with the claim made by The Women's Foundation where it is stated that "men earn around 20% more than women across all occupations for work of equal value" (2014: 15).

Women in Hong Kong have come to accept that there are choices to be made in the current cultural context. If a woman chooses a work-family balanced life, she knows she is severely diminishing her chances of moving up in the company hierarchy (Tai, 2013). There are few organisations in Hong Kong with policies to help employees take care of their family responsibilities (Ng and Fosh, 2004). The lack of such policies has had a direct and negative impact on employee commitment towards the organisations that employ them (Chiu and Ng, 1999). In addition, successful career women can be stereotyped as over ambitious, cold and unfeminine (Cooke, 2005). This cultural image does not correlate with social expectations which demand Chinese women to put their families first and definitely before their career (Xian and Woodhams, 2008). Additionally, it does not correlate with the idea of non-western women being religious, family-oriented, legal minors, illiterate and domestic, as Mohanty (1984) argues these women are viewed in her criticisms of western feminist movements.

Facing this situation, it is important to highlight the central role that domestic helpers play in Hong Kong society. Almost all of the 312,395 domestic helpers in Hong Kong originate in the Philippines or Indonesia (Hong Kong Immigration Department, 2012) and the territory faces a serious shortage of local labour in this category (Tai, 2013). The situation is such that the Hong Kong Immigration Department has created a special class of visa for these foreign, mostly female workers. This visa is called “foreign domestic helper visa”, and as part of the requirements for issuing it, the domestic helper should be working full time and living in the home of her employers (Hong Kong Immigration Department, 2013; Hong Kong Labour Department, 2013). This requirement can lead to the abuse of the worker, who may become a 24-hour servant with only one rest day, at the whim of the employer. The duties of the helpers are not limited to the common chores that may be performed by a domestic helper, but also: grocery shopping, cooking, dog walking, and quite often helping the children with their homework or tutoring them in the English language, similar to other situations of migrant domestic helpers in the west (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2010). These helpers are an essential support for families, and especially for those working mothers who are reliant on them for the care and upbringing of their children. This form of help is essential for the career progression of the mothers (Lo et al., 2003).

Even though there are childcare facilities in Hong Kong for working mothers, Hong Kong mothers perceive childcare provided by domestic helpers at home as more culturally acceptable (Thein et al., 2010). Interestingly, the perception of the role of the worker within the family varies between genders: males see the hiring of domestic help as a “gift” to their wives, or a justification for their lack of engagement in domestic chores, whereas females see them as less

than optimal help and to a certain extent, a new member of the family whose emotional needs must also be cared for (Groves and Lui, 2012).

Men's challenges

Whitehead (2002) argues that many men are gender-blind towards gender related issues that women might face. This is due to the fact that men see themselves as the norm, and this limits their ability to observe gender issues that are not directly relevant to them. The section below discusses some social factors from a dynamic changing society that might challenge men's gender blindness and encourage them to address gender issues in the broader society.

Social changes seen in Hong Kong have not simply affected women in isolation and interestingly, men have reported cases of discrimination throughout recruitment processes (Francesco and Shaffer, 2009). Furthermore, as presented by Leung and Chan (2012), contemporary Hong Kong males are said to be suffering from a crisis of masculinity, based on the dissolution of the traditional patriarchal family, manifested in the increase in divorce rates, changes in work patterns and evolution of cultural ideas regarding issues such as gender, family and sexuality. These changes have challenged the traditional idea of what is it to be man in Hong Kong, subsequently increasing pressure on the social services that are ill-prepared for the growing number of men in need. Leung and Chan (2012) conducted an extensive mixed methods study on the main challenges facing men in Hong Kong. Within their study, more than 500 men identified work as their main source of stress and a limited number mentioned family life within this category. However, the authors highlighted that, after closer scrutiny of the interviews (conducted with part of the quantitative sample), it was evident that even if respondents identified work as their main source of stress, most of their problems were actually related to work-family balance.

One explanation for this behaviour is based on the traditional role of men as breadwinners and not family carers. Overwhelmingly, almost 75% of men responded in agreement to the statement that “men should take the role of breadwinners, while women should act as carers”. In addition, more than 65% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the idea that women are a threat to the male social status. Overall, the study conducted by Leung and Chan (2012) shows how men are also struggling with social change in contemporary Hong Kong; on the one hand, they are trapped by their traditional gender stereotypes but on the other hand, Hong Kong society is changing, which includes the erosion of the patriarchal family, forcing them to question traditional roles.

Gender equality legislation and institutions in Hong Kong

Before introducing the equality legislation in Hong Kong, and to contextualise the current section better, it is important to stress that Hong Kong is a liberal market economy with a voluntarist approach to labour relations which. This means a lack of a strong legislative framework to frame labour relations and limited governmental intervention. This approach to labour relations has been directly inherited from the British colonial rule, without any significant modification (Ng-Sek Hong, 2010).

Even though the social changes mentioned in the previous sections have provided new opportunities for women in Hong Kong, these social changes have not always been reflected in both society and legislation. Consequently, there was a dearth of legislation to address the problem of gender based discrimination until the early 1990s. Lee (2003) attributes the delay in the establishment of anti-discriminatory legislation to three factors. The first factor is centred on colonial rule. The United Kingdom at that time did not concern itself with explicitly protecting civil rights, due to the fact that these rights could be used to question its legitimacy as ruler. The

second factor involves the British colonial administration's non-interference stance towards indigenous institutions and domestic issues. The final factor encompasses the conflict between gender equality and local conservatives, in addition to the business elite, who have always advocated the least possible state intervention. This support is due to the belief that intervention could be detrimental to the competitiveness of Hong Kong as a regional powerhouse. However, in the early 1990s the colonial administration began to take an active role in the legislative field and the initiation of anti-discrimination laws.

This section will describe the most relevant legislation regarding gender issues and their social implications in Hong Kong. Since the early 1990s, and to equalise traditional gender inequalities between men and women, the Hong Kong government started to pass legislation concerning gender equality in the work place. The Bill of Rights ordinance, enacted in 1991, finds itself within this category, aimed at managing the concerns of local residents, which emerged after the protest and incidents in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989.

Although this bill was explicitly aimed at protecting human rights in general, it became the starting point of a series of anti-sex discrimination laws in Hong Kong (Ng and Ng, 2008). Part II of the bill sets the foundations for equal rights; Article 1, section 2 demands that all men and women shall have an equal right to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in this Bill of Rights. Later, more specific ordinances were passed by the Hong Kong legislature addressing sex discriminations issues. Several of the most relevant enactments include: the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance, which are subsequently discussed.

Anti-discrimination legislation

The Sex Discrimination Ordinance of 1995 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status or pregnancy and sexual harassment. Special emphasis is placed on assurances that there are no pay differences between genders, granting all employees equal pay for equal work in an attempt to reduce the pay gendered gap (Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities, 2014). This legislation is targeted directly at increasing equality in the workplace and, as stipulated in the ordinance, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was created. The commission, created in 1996, became the statutory body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, and designing a code of practice. This code focuses on the elimination of discrimination, the promotion of equal opportunities for both men and women and the elimination of sexual harassment. In cases of discrimination on family grounds, the EOC is responsible for resolving complaints and overseeing the implementation of the legislation (Cheung and Chung, 2009).

Wing-yee Lee (1996) takes a critical approach to the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, expressing reservations about the law and its real impact. Wing-yee Lee argues that the ordinance is primarily based on similar legislation passed by the British parliament a few years earlier, itself modelled on previous American and Australian laws, a view also supported by Loper (2012). This criticism demonstrates that the establishment of this instrument is the result of borrowing from the West, as a clear example of how a colonial power has shaped and influenced the life of women in Hong Kong.

This western borrowing causes a misfit of legislation, as Hong Kong lacks the social movements and cultural context such as the feminist movement that helped countries in the West to obtain such legislation. Moreover, and from a postcolonial feminist perspective, it could be

argued that the borrowing of western legislation may not even address the concerns of the local population. Even if well intentioned, this legislation may lack the ability to affect the Chinese culture and cultural mind-set, largely due to the limited enforcement powers held among authorities (Cheung and Chung, 2009). Ng and Ng (2002) stress that the EOC is highly restricted by its statutory role and sluggish actions of the government towards real change in the status quo. Finally, the effectiveness and social impact of the EOC are difficult to measure as the Commission never publishes the cases raised, preferring very general statistics, as stated in the interview with the Commission official. Based on these criticisms, it would appear that the EOC has more of a symbolic role than as a change agent for equality.

In 1996, appearing to succumb to the pressures of women's rights groups in the territory (Peterson, 2003), the government decided to join the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The decision was made under the tacit approval of both the government of the United Kingdom (the colonial power at the time) and the Beijing government in waiting. Whilst the United Nations General Assembly passed this convention in 1979, it took the Hong Kong government more than a decade sign the treaty. The adhesion of the government to this legislation and its successors begs contextualisation. The context of decolonisation and the return of Hong Kong to Mainland China caused a large degree of uncertainty concerning the implementation and overall future of legislation. The adoption of CEDAW was an attempt to calm the local population and to extend guarantees for the inhabitants of the soon-to-be former colony. In 2001, the Women's Commission was also formed as the body to enforce the CEDAW (Cheung and Chung, 2009), in addition to advising the government on issues of interest to women, and to engage with interested groups. The actual effectiveness of the adoption of CEDAW and of the Women's

Commission, its enforcer, has been questioned by a series of Women's Rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities, 2014) in Hong Kong that have produced a series of shadow reports on being critical of the CEDAW implementation in Hong Kong over the years. Moreover, The Women's Foundation (The Women's Foundation, 2014), another interest group, has also independently submitted to the Hong Kong government a series of suggestions for the improvement of situation of women in Hong Kong.

Finally, the last law relevant to this study is the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance passed in 1997. The enactment makes it unlawful for any person or organisation to discriminate against a person, male or female, on the basis of family status. The aim of the ordinance was to encourage a better work-life balance for employees. As previously stated, most domestic demands are the exclusive responsibility of female family members. This ordinance was therefore specifically designed to target working women. The law is concerned primarily with two types of possible discrimination, direct and indirect. Direct discrimination would be the demotion of a female employee who has recently become a mother because of her new condition. Indirect discriminations apply to all employees yet, in a practical sense, may only be detrimental to those with outside responsibilities; for example management requires all employees to work overtime, but some employees are left unable to fulfil this directive due to family responsibilities after work (Zanko, 2012). At this stage, it is relevant to mention that the Hong Kong government is currently holding a public consultation on the discrimination legislation, with the objective of considering "how [it] can be improved to better prevent discrimination and promote equality for everyone in Hong Kong" (EOC, 2015).

Motivations and attitudes of the Hong Kong government regarding Equality legislation and its implementation

The government reasoning behind the modernisation of legislation or the introduction of legislation regarding social equality is not explicit. However, a few years before leaving office, the colonial government underwent an overall modernisation campaign of Hong Kong from an institutional perspective. The Hong Kong government continued this campaign as a unilateral move; both governments acted without much consultation. This attitude is clear from the Shadow Report presented by the Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities (2006), a group that pursues gender equality and equal opportunities for women. The Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities is a joint platform of 11 women's organisations in Hong Kong, and its mission is to advocate for legislation that protects women's equal opportunities. In its Shadow Report (2015), the Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities urges the government to engage in civil consultation regarding equality legislation, presenting the idea that the government has not consulted social stakeholders as it perhaps should have.

During the early 1990s, women's rights groups started to become more prominent in society. They advocated for Hong Kong legislature to include Hong Kong as a signatory of the United Nations CEDAW. At that point, Hong Kong legislature only had a symbolic role and could not enforce its power. In 1993, facing social pressure, the government decided that instead of making Hong Kong a signatory of the treaty, it would initiate a series of consultations with relevant social stakeholders. These consultations produced a Green Paper on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Unfortunately, the outcome of this paper was perceived by women's rights groups to be a means to soften the lack of establishment of gender equality legislation and weakly orientated towards any real change in gender equality (Peterson, 2003).

Part of the supporting argument for the Green Paper was that the implementation of legislation supporting gender equality could have negative consequences for the economy (Peterson, 1997). Clearly, the government had decided to back local business tycoons, who manage most of the economy and advocate for the least possible government interference (Studwell, 2008). Remarkably, the publication of such a paper and its subsequent social debate created a large degree of discontent and indignation in Hong Kong society, forcing the government to become a signatory of the treaty. However, the tactic adopted by the government after signing the treaty involved a deliberate delay in the necessary steps of compliance (Peterson, 1997).

Ng and Ng (2002) highlight the lack of effectiveness and limitations of governmental institutions (such as the EOC) to deal with the issues of discrimination. Based on this, it could be suggested that the role of the government is to pass legislation in an effort to be seen by society as dealing with discrimination and equality issues, but the reality is that this legislation lacks the depth necessary to have any meaningful impact on society. For instance, and as highlighted by Lisa More, a spokeswoman for The Women's Foundation, in an interview for the current research project, the government has recently introduced a mandatory three-day paternity leave, mostly symbolic because most companies already grant three days.

This section has highlighted an increase in anti-discriminatory legislation passed in Hong Kong, but this has lacked any real social reflection, especially when analysing stereotypical gender roles (Ng and Chakrabarty, 2005). Household chores remain divided according to gender lines, and women are still the primary care givers and home makers. Even if women do work outside the home, their income is viewed as supplementary, and men remain the principal

breadwinners (Tang et al., 2010). Lisa More (The Women's Foundation) argues that governmental effort aimed at providing women in Hong Kong with a more working friendly environment has been counterproductive. The representative states that this is due to the female gaining double the work; household chores remain the same but due to better working conditions, their professional responsibilities increase. Due to these ambiguities, further research must be focused on this area as is addressed by the research question regarding this issue.

Leadership in a Chinese cultural context

There is a paucity of empirical research and a limited understanding of how Chinese people view women as managers in China, especially from a Chinese perspective (Bowen et al., 2007). In contrast, several studies have been conducted in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan aimed at understanding different aspects of female Chinese leaders (see below for detail). Men currently dominate management positions. Furthermore, power in organisations is not only about the number of women in managerial position, but also about who the key decision-makers are (Nicolson, 2013). According to the results of the Hong Kong 2011 Population Census, among the working population, there were 233,371 males and 126,346 females in management or administration positions, which shows that for every female manager, there are 1.8 male managers (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014).

More remarkable is the lack of change in the number of civil servants working for the government. Out of a total of 159,217 personnel in 2012, only 56,768 were female (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014). Ten years ago, this proportion looked very similar with a total of 57,148 females out of a total 170,484 personnel. It could be argued that if a government is intent on balancing the ratio of women to men in the workforce, the starting point should be the ratio imbalance of its own workforce. The fact that

the ratio has remained almost unchanged over the last decade could show a lack of real interest in addressing this inequality. Regardless of the reasoning behind this imbalance, it is evident that women currently constitute a segment that is underutilised and underrepresented in management positions (Ebrahimi et al., 2001).

Empirical research on leadership and gender in China and Hong Kong

Acknowledging that women have been underutilised in the workforce of both Mainland China and Hong Kong, Ebrahimi et al. (2001) conducted a comparative study to test whether motivation to manage was a cause for lower numbers of female managers when compared to males. The findings revealed that there is a significantly higher level of motivation to manage in Hong Kong when compared to Mainland China, but no difference between the genders. A second finding was that a lack of motivation to hold managerial positions did not seem to justify the higher number of male managers. Moreover, females have been shown to be just as capable as males. Women in top management positions use *Guanxi* (the local Chinese term for establishing connections and networking) in the same way as their male counterparts, and are also successful in obtaining finance for their business (Hussain et al., 2010).

Regarding the general perception of women as managers in Hong Kong, they are considered to be more relationship oriented than men, yet this perception could also be understood in the Chinese context as being “too soft”. In addition, women were perceived to be better communicators than men and less concerned with saving face, but also less assertive. Interestingly, female managers felt they were saved from criticism regarding errors because their superiors were more forgiving towards them. Yet, their self-perception identifies a lower drive and commitment than their male counterparts (Francesco and Shaffer, 2009). These attitudes reinforce and are reinforced by traditional gender roles, as they present men as more assertive

than women and women as having a higher level of interest in interpersonal relationships than men.

Female managers in Hong Kong perceive and expect sexist behaviour as part of the social code, and understand it as 'acceptable' (Venter, 2002). They view men and women as different, demanding different treatment, which is not perceived to be unfair or unjustified, but expected. Women perceive the labour market to be male oriented and that they have to work harder to prove themselves in the eyes of their employers or clients. Yet, rather than blaming social rules, these women accept the status quo and work within it (Venter, 2002). Based on her research on Hong Kong professional women, Lee (2003: 95) states that:

[women have] to be successful in both career and family. However, she does not associate this with oppression, inequality, or exploitation. On the contrary, she believes she has acquired a sense of freedom and agency in choosing her own course.

This indigenous perspective directly contradicts the three principal strands of feminist theory in the West (liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminism), which views women at a social disadvantage (Hines, 2008). In addition, this understanding of Chinese women also supports the criticism of western feminism made by Mohanty (1984), as its views non-western women as religious, family-oriented, legal minors, illiterate and domestic.

A postcolonial feminist approach is therefore sensitive to these supposed conflicts and contradictions. As Thein et al. (2010) have established in their study on work life balance in Hong Kong, the idea of conflict between these two domains is a western construct. Hong Kong women perceive the engagement in paid work, not as a limitation of their ability to care for their family, but as a means to generate financial resources to provide for their families.

Women's effectiveness

Perceived gender differences concerning managerial effectiveness may pose barriers for females wishing to gain positions of power or for females already in those positions. Yet, these differences may only be perceived, as several studies (subsequently discussed) show. Focusing on effectiveness in management in Chinese cultural contexts, no difference could be established between men and women in Taiwan. However, the researchers found evidence of subordinate stereotyping when describing line managers (Cheng and Lin, 2012). Taking a different approach and using the perception of effective leadership as the phenomenon to be understood, Chow (2005) conducted a study in Hong Kong using male and female ethnic Chinese middle managers. The study was aimed at understanding the differences in perceived effectiveness between men and women. Chow established a series of leadership attributes which were tested in both male and female managers. The results of the study identified the following attributes found in both men and women: the positive attributes of modesty, self-sacrifice, collaboration, being inspiring, diplomatic, administratively competent, performance oriented, decisive, having integrity and being visionary; and the negative attributes of being self-centred, malevolent, non-participative, bureaucratic and autocratic.

The only statistically significant difference was established for the attributes of procedural and face-saving, which were more often attributable to men. Moreover, there were gender differences for the order in which the attributes were ranked, with men perceiving their leaders to be more performance oriented and women displaying more human characteristics than stereotypes might lead us to think. Chow (2005) concludes that the lack of large variances in the perception of leadership attributes among genders is an encouraging signal for women, especially for those who might be interested in achieving managerial positions in the

organisation. Consequently, females may feel that they have an equal opportunity to gain managerial roles and in turn, question their traditional role in society.

Women as managers and the management of women's careers

The aim of this section is to review a series of studies on female managers and how they manage their professional careers to establish the current state of research and better address the research question regarding the salience and influences of traditional female roles in Chinese societies. The focus of this section is on how female managers organise their personal and family life and how their social role affects their profession. Xian and Woodhams (2008) have studied the ways in which successful Chinese managers have arranged their careers, using western experiences as a benchmark. Whilst the singularities of the Chinese cultural context often lead to western theories being considered inappropriate, the research focuses on five key areas: career success, career goals, career planning, career strategies, and the impact of gender on career success (Xian and Woodhams, 2008).

Interestingly, considering career success, Chinese female managers did not cite their managerial position as a form of success. Female managers responded humbly that they were doing fine, in spite of their current position suggesting a large degree of accomplishment. Xian and Woodhams (2008) argue that Chinese women who are professionally successful are viewed as lacking in femininity, which causes an unwillingness to admit success. Female managers are aware that success is viewed as unfeminine and may downplay their success for this reason. Moreover, Leung and Chan (2014) presented empirical evidence that men in Hong Kong perceived the successful woman as a threat. This is in line with the idea presented in the West by Kerfoot and Knights (1998), who argue that many women in organisations are expected to achieve a “feminist ideal”; a concept based on a passive role in society, primarily linked to care

giving as a source of life meaning, which ultimately denies women the value of self and autonomy. This perception of a non-feminine component to professional success may be relevant for the present study.

Xian and Woodhams (2008) highlight the difficulties in establishing the concrete career goals of the managers interviewed in their study. When asked directly about their goals, all female managers replied with evasive answers. Nonetheless, all participants eventually identified short-term and long-term professional goals, which suggests that even if not openly admitted, managers have a broad idea about their professional goals. Additionally, the women did not openly express a clear career plan, most respondents attributing their career success to chance, as opposed to self-determination. Chinese female managers focus primarily on three strategies to advance in their careers: training and learning to keep up with the latest developments in the industry, even though quite often this is not possible due to work overload; seeking challenging projects, which provided the early career managers with practical knowledge and self-confidence, helping them to advance in their careers; and finally, networking, getting to know new people and establishing links with them, providing information and opportunities. Whilst, Xian and Woodhams (2008) applied western concepts to a culturally Chinese case, Wajcman (2013) identified a series of mechanisms, developed by western female managers in the west, as a way to balance personal and professional responsibilities. Interestingly, the study highlights the importance of domestic help, the choice of remaining single and/or choosing to have fewer children, which may be relevant to female managers in Hong Kong.

Interestingly, in a different study, managers denied the fact that being a professional and female may have had an impact on their family/personal life; yet, the sample shows that a large

number of respondents were over 30 years old and childless. This proportion is much larger than the average of the population, based on official statistics (Choi and Chen, 2006). Consequently, it could be inferred that women in managerial positions tend to have fewer children or none at all, when compared to women in non-managerial roles. Furthermore, several of the married respondents expressed some kind of tension between their professional and private life, all be it in a reserved, cautious manner, exposing their fear of not being able to fulfil both their family role and their professional role (Choi and Chen, 2006). These findings demonstrate that conflict exists between the traditional female role, their expected behaviour as members of a group (in this case their family) and their professional careers.

Challenges that women in leadership positions face

Western literature has identified a series of challenges that women in leadership positions face, often related to the gendered structure, norms and culture of the organisation. For example, long working hours are an expectation of managers found in modern organisations to advance their careers and move to higher positions (Tarrant et al., 2010). This example highlights a basic conflict between female managerial roles and social roles which still designate the role of care giver to the female. Therefore, a woman who devotes time and energy to advance her career is likely to find problems regarding her role as a carer within the family (Carli and Eagly, 2011). This has caused some women to attempt to be successful in both career and family realms by becoming “superwomen”, yet others have opted to not have children and/or remain single (Northouse, 2012). Furthermore, women who have already attained or expect to reach leadership positions must deal with common social stereotypes regarding women and women as leaders. These stereotypes may or may not be relevant to the individual case, but they undoubtedly affect judgements and prejudices belonging to other members of the organisation concerning the

female manager (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Whilst postcolonial feminism cautions against the universality of western theorising, the aforementioned issues may be relevant to the current case.

Conclusion

The aim of this research is to conduct an analysis from an indigenous perspective, due to the singularities of Chinese culture and as such, an indigenous theory of leadership has been identified along with a postcolonial feminist stance. This feminist stance supports the use of indigenous theories and attempts not to impose the ideologies developed in the West on cultures which are composed of radically different social, historical and economic backgrounds. From this perspective, the need to acknowledge the influence of Confucian concepts has been highlighted, as this philosophy is deeply embedded within Chinese culture, and shapes the roles and relationships of its members, reproducing a gender binary logic. Confucianism reinforces the traditionally assigned roles to men and women and, therefore, acts as a barrier to changing gender norms and roles that may occur as the increasing numbers of women gain positions of power.

Feminist movements in China have also been considered as they challenge the traditional role of women in Chinese society. This chapter has evaluated the entrance of women into the workforce in Hong Kong and provided a critical review of the current legislation on gender in Hong Kong, shown to be less than adequate when challenging existing gender roles and ideologies. The second part of the chapter focused on previous studies of female leadership in Chinese cultural contexts. This review highlights the limited research conducted in this area and the need for further studies. Remarkably, after conducting an extensive literature search as the basis for this chapter, it has not been possible to identify a single comprehensive study that combines or relates female leadership with paternalistic leadership.

It is imperative to highlight that paternalistic leadership is the most researched and developed indigenous Chinese theory of management. Due to the cultural foundation of this theory, it could provide more contextualized answers and explanations to the phenomena of female leadership in China. The two most extensive reviews on the latest developments in paternalistic leadership were conducted by Chen and Farh (2010) and Wu and Xu (2012), yet both reviews omitted discussion of female related factors or issues. This lack of research consequently exposes a gendered knowledge gap in the literature that the current study aims to address.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain and justify the methodology, assumptions and decision-making underpinning this study. The first part of this chapter is concerned with ontological and epistemological assumptions: assumptions about the nature of reality; and what constitutes knowledge (Cohen et al., 2011). Following this, the research strategy is presented, alongside the explanation and justification of a multilevel analysis approach, integrated within a case study. The overall research framework, including each level of analysis and the data collected, is then presented. Subsequently, a thematic analysis is presented as a method to analyse the data. This chapter concludes with a reflexion of the research process.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions

The most relevant enquiry paradigms in social sciences are called upon in this section to establish the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have guided this research project. The classification of ontology and epistemology outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994) has been selected to frame the assumptions of the study as Guba and Lincoln (1994) is considered seminal (Morse et al. 2008). Guba and Lincoln (1994) describe our competing paradigms for informing and guiding research: Positivism, Postpositivism, Critical theory (and related ideological positions), and Constructivism. Each of these competing paradigms is composed of a unique ontological and epistemological stance. Ontology refers to the theory of being, and focuses on the nature of reality, while epistemology sets the requirement for acceptably gaining knowledge

(Cohen et al., 2011). Figure 8 summarises each of the four paradigms and their underpinning ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Figure 8: Research paradigms

Item	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical theories	Constructivism
Ontology	There is a reality independent of the observer.	There is a reality independent of observer, but only imperfectly apprehensible due to human limitations.	Virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethical and gender values.	Local and specific constructed realities.
Epistemology	Objective findings not influenced by the investigator.	Research is not independent of the object of study, but objectivity is an ideal.	Subjective reality. Value mediated findings.	Subjective reality. Investigation and its object intertwined.

Source: Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Kelemen and Rumens (2008)

Positivism postulates that within the social sciences there is a reality independent from the researcher, and that objectives, independent of the researcher's influence, are achievable. Postpositivism also understands reality as independent of the observer, but acknowledges the limitations of humanity to comprehend it. In contrast, critical theories view reality as constructed by social, political, cultural, economic, ethical and gender values. Findings are considered subjective and influenced by the values of the investigator. Constructivism perceives reality as local, contingent and socially constructed. Within constructivism, reality is experientially based

and the investigator and the object of investigation are interlinked, creating the subjective findings of the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Kelemen and Rumens, 2008).

This research project was conceived within the constructivist paradigm, on the premise that Chinese/Hong Kong culture is not static but in a process of constant change, as the culture influences and is influenced by the globalisation process (Child, 2009). Chinese reality is multiple and socially constructed; the current social arrangements are an ongoing human production, with links to both the past and present that lead to the current social order (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Additionally, the research conducted acknowledges that researchers are part of and influence the issues that they seek to investigate, as is part of the constructivist epistemology (Morrison, 2002).

However, as the research progressed, a postcolonial feminist approach emerged as central to both the methodology and understanding of the work, derived from the literature the case study and the data. The use of postcolonial feminist theory necessitated a shift from the constructivist paradigm to that of critical theory. Critical theory is formed of a broad range of perspectives which are united by:

their concern to explore material inequalities and in the desire to link critique to action [...] critical theory can generate arresting analysis, challenge orthodox understanding about management and open up new avenues for thought and advancing management knowledge (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008: 9).

Based on this, postcolonial feminist theory belongs within the paradigm of critical theory due to its comprehension of reality as subjective, but also due to being epistemologically founded upon the inclusion of subaltern voices, and the recognition of their historical positioning (Anderson, 2000), in this case the traditional role of women in Chinese societies.

Concerning the specific ontology and epistemology of feminist research, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) have argued there are mostly two research approaches to study women's experiences. The first approach is to understand gender as a variable of the studied phenomena. Here, it is assumed that it is not possible to generalise the finding of a specific study to both genders; therefore, gender is used as a variable (among others) to make the findings of a study generalisable and relevant to a wider population. This type of research is generally conducted by researchers who hold objectivity and neutrality as an ideal and usually quantitative methods are applied. The second approach to feminist research, the approach that this thesis undertakes, views gender as not only one more variable among others within a study, but as an intrinsic dimension to every aspect of human behaviour. This is not to say that gender is a fixed property of an individual. Rather, gender is understood as culturally constructed and thus changeable from one culture to the next and in specific moments in time. As such, the gendered realities of women who participate in this study are contextually contingent and historically patterned, and given a prominent position within this thesis (Lorber, 2000). This understanding of gender underpins the thesis, and has also informed the shift from social constructivism to critical theory.

A case study strategy

Several research strategies and methods were evaluated and considered for the present case, ranging from: ethnography and/or participant observations, which were discarded due to the difficulty involved in the researcher spending the necessary time in Hong Kong (Brewer 2000); grounded theory, which was deemed unsuitable due to the fact that the literature review established that there are relevant theories for the present case; and life histories were also deliberated, but considering that they can be largely time consuming for the actors involved, they were discarded for practical reasons (Musson, 2004). Consequently, a case study approach was

decided upon as the most suitable research strategy for the present thesis. This decision was based also on the fact that the current research project is not aimed at controlling variables, or measuring their effect. If that were the case, an experimental methodology would be more appropriate. In addition, the project does not aim to quantify the data, which would call for a qualitative survey (Gomm et al., 2000).

Yin (2011) recommends the use of case studies when conducting exploratory research, as in the current case. This view is also shared by Eisenhardt (1989), who stressed the contributions a case study is able to make to research and to theory building in new topic areas. These affirmations are descriptive of the current study, which analyses the effect of both the traditional, expected role of women in Chinese societies, and the expected leadership behaviour described in the theory of paternalistic leadership on the management style and leadership of ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong. In addition, it analyses the influence of company policies and the Hong Kong institutional framework on female management behaviours.

Furthermore, the present case is contextualized in real-world phenomena currently occurring and which bears dynamic effects: female managers in Hong Kong gaining and exercising positions of power, a condition that also speaks in favour of the chosen methodology. This situational justification is exemplified by Yin (2011), who highlights that these conditions are the best possible conditions for the use of a case study as the chosen methodology.

Out of the potential classification of case studies, the current case study fits into the category of a single case study because only one organisation has been used for the current research project (Tsang, 2014). There are several types of case study found under the heading of a single case study (Yin, 2009). Yet, this case study constitutes an “instrumental case study”, as

the main focus of the research is not the company selected, but the questions the research aims to answer. Stake, (2005: 445) defines an instrumental case study as “a particular case examined mainly to provide insights into an issue or redraw a generalization”. In this case, the aim of the research project is to challenge the “generalisation” of the dominant leadership conceptualisation, (paternalistic leadership), and to examine the issue of ethnically Chinese female middle managers in Hong Kong and their working environment. This approach makes the selected company a mere instrument to achieve a higher research goal. Moreover, the selection of a single case study can be justified by three factors: first, the company to be studied was able to provide enough data not to warrant any further cases; second, the data has been triangulated to reduce bias and provide a more holistic view; and third, the company fulfils the desired criteria (Yin, 2011).

There are certain criticisms concerning the use of case studies as a research format, which have been addressed by Flyvbjerg (2006). First, it is often noted that a case study produces context-dependent knowledge, yet this type of knowledge is by no means less valuable than context-independent knowledge. Second, it is believed that it is not possible to generalise from one case study; but this is dependent on the case study and the specific circumstances, with many scientific breakthroughs being achieved based on single case studies. Third, Flyvbjerg (2006) contends the idea that case studies contain subject bias and that quite often researchers gather only information which supports their pre-existing idea. This argument could be applicable to any methodology as, for example, quantitative researchers conducting surveys could manipulate the selection of variables and categories used in their analysis. Essentially, any methodology lacking rigour in its application is open to bias. In summary, case studies as with any other methods, have received criticism and have some limitations. Yet, a case study, when conducted

well, can provide the scientific community with valuable knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Tsang, 2014) and in essence, the choice of the methodology should be based on the research problems, which may make a case study approach appropriate.

Finally, as part of the case study strategy a multilevel analysis of the organisation was developed. Here, data were collected at several levels of the organisation: subordinates, middle level (middle managers), top level (senior managers and company policies), in addition to data from the institutional influences in the present case. This approach provides a robust strategy to analysing management across the hierarchies of the organisation (Rousseau, 1985; Klein and Kozlowski, 2000). This multilevel approach and the use of case studies also provides a holistic contextualisation of the phenomenon under study; in this case, ethnically Chinese female managers in Hong Kong and consequently, offers a better ground for generating theoretical insights than other qualitative research methods (Tsang, 2014).

The research context

Before the selection of a company for the current study, suitability criteria were established, with the main criterion being that the company for this study should be from Hong Kong. The main activity of the organisation is to connect buyers from the rest of the world with Chinese manufacturers, and to provide support for these buyers. Supporting activities range from help with logistics to opening lines of credit, and depend heavily on the customers' needs and relationship with the company.

The company is owned and managed by Eric (whose name has been changed to ensure anonymity), who set up the organisation 18 years ago. Eric describes his business and

management style in his own words as “a family business”, an idea that fits the model of paternalistic leadership, which focuses on the family-like environment of Chinese enterprises.

The second person in the hierarchy is Alice, who has been working in the company for 17 years. Alice usually doubles as deputy general manager/human resources manager as well as keeping a close eye on the finances. Her role in the organisation, as is the case in most Chinese enterprises, is loosely defined (Farh, et al., 2004), and she has a say in all aspects of the business. It was later discovered from the interviews that she is part of Eric’s extended family, which is another feature that fits into the model of paternalistic leadership.

There are two offices which constitute the company: one located in Hong Kong, forming the headquarters and the legally registered location of the company, and one in the city of Shenzhen in Mainland China. For this research, only the Hong Kong office was studied, due to the fact that the mainland office would not fit into the current multilevel analyses as it is outside the Hong Kong institutional influence. For the purposes of confidentiality, all the names of the participants have been changed.

The organisation has a relatively flat structure (see Appendix B). Eric is the general manager, followed by Alice as his deputy. The remaining employees are grouped into small functional teams led by a manager. The size of the teams is dependent on the volume of trade of the product; for example, Vivien, who manages working uniforms, has 5 people on her team, but Helen, who manages the more popular product of male underwear, has 12. Some of these teams are led by male managers and others by female managers, but for the current case study, only teams led by female, ethnically Chinese managers were selected.

The trading company based in Hong Kong has more than 250 employees and the working experience of the managers ranges from 9 years for the youngest to 28 years for the oldest. All managers hold university degrees, yet quite a few of the degrees are held in non-business related areas such as English literature or geography. These managers are all responsible for subordinates. The manager in charge of the fewest people presides over five and the manager responsible for the most is in charge of 12. For each manager interviewed, two subordinates were also interviewed, a male and a female. The aim was to generate enough data to cross validate the data obtained from the managers. The subordinates were significantly younger than their managers, but all were equally proficient in English. The figure below summarises the biographical information of the managers and their subordinates.

Figure 9 Biographical Information

Name	Working experience	Years in current position	Current position	Number of people managed	Male subordinate interviewed	Female subordinate interviewed
Selma	22	5	Textiles General manager	7	Jerry	Amanda
Elizabeth	28	15	Furniture General Manager	6	Kevin	Lisa
Winnie	10	3	Business developer (schools uniforms)	9	Brandon	Rosa
Samantha	9	3	Business developer (kitchenware)	10	Robert	Stella
Phoebe	16	5	Business developer (female Spots cloths)	10	Michael	Olivia

Helen	15	5	Business developer (Male underwear)	12	Justin	Rachel
Man	14	6	Business developer (female shoes)	12	Rayan	Megan
Christy	9	1	Business developer (female swimming suits)	5	Paul	Lila
Laura	11	4	Business developer (female underwear)	8	William	Virginia
Maria	15	8	Logistics manager	12	Kevin	Madison
Mandy	8	3	Business developer (Gardening)	5	Tom	Claire
Tina	16	6	Business developer (toys)	10	John	Sofia
Sarah	15	9	Senior accountant	8	Peter	Amy
Cindy	15	8	Finance Manager	8	Mark	Marta
Vivien	12	6	Business developer (working uniforms)	5	Max	Ana

Subsequent to the description of the social role of women in traditional Chinese societies, (presented in the section “Traditional female roles in China” of the literature review), issues of voice and representation emerged. It became relevant to ask if the subaltern could speak for themselves (Spivak, 1988), (female managers in the current case), and how this thesis could best represent their voice. Once the data was collected for the current study, and in view of its richness, it was decided that the entire sections of the interviews were going to be placed in the discussion section, attempting to represent the views of these women faithfully. However, the research is carried out within the critical theory paradigm, and whilst the views are faithfully represented, their testimonies are not taken at face value. The answers to the questions are contextualised and cross-referenced for a better understanding.

A multilevel study with data triangulation

The purpose of this study is to understand how both, the traditional, expected role of women in Chinese societies, and the expected leadership behaviour described in the theory of paternalistic leadership affect ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong with regard to their actual management style and leadership, taking into account the organisational and institutional influences. In an attempt to analyse the current case in a holistic form and reduce potential bias, this study is built on a three-tier analysis: managerial, organisational and institutional. As mentioned previously, the current research strategy is based on a multilevel case study, which also analyses the institutional influences. Phenomena at both the micro and macro organisational contexts are in a relationship of consistent and mutual influence; consequently, a multilevel organisational strategy presents a robust approach to understand organisational

phenomena as no single level analysis can adequately capture these mutual influences (Klein and Kozlowski, 2000).

Data triangulation has been undertaken at each level of analysis, complementary to the multilevel analysis (Antonakis et al., 2004). This is achieved by triangulating data from different but relevant sources, allowing for the capture of different features of reality (Denzin, 1970). Data triangulation is relevant to any cross-cultural research project, but specifically recommended for studies conducted by non-locals in Chinese cultural context, as a method to improve the analysis in general, but also to reduce cultural misunderstandings (Stening, and Zhang, 2007). However, data triangulation should not be treated as an end in itself (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki and Nummela, 2004).

The data triangulation applied to the current thesis emerges from the data collected at multiple levels: the managerial level, by co-constructing data through interviews with the managers and their subordinates; the organisational level, by collecting data from the interviews with the senior management of the organisation, but also by analysing the official external and unofficial day to day management policies and practices (Flick, 1992, 2014); and finally, the institutional level, consisting of different data found in official governmental publications and legislation, but also in the actual application of the policies and legislation, where interest groups also expressed their views.

Cross-reference and cross-examination of data

Data collection took place over approximately two years and involved three rounds of interviews. The fact that managers were interviewed over such a period of time provides the study with longitudinal data. Repeated interviewing and the subsequent collection of longitudinal

data were carried out to avoid a common criticism regarding single rounds of semi-structured interviews. Single rounds of interviews have been critiqued for only providing a snapshot of the phenomena being investigated, presenting a limitation of the data collected (Diefenbach, 2009). Moreover, conducting repeated interviewing at different stages adds greater depth to the data than could be otherwise achieved in a single round of interviews (Laslett and Rapoport, 1975). During this two-year period and to ensure that the collected data could be cross-referenced in the analysis of this work, the data collected at each stage have been constantly under analysis so as to identify any significant issues.

Once a significant issue was identified at a specific level of analysis, it was addressed in the subsequent round of interviews, ensuring that cross-reference data were obtained. For instance, during the interview with the top management of the company, it was mentioned that even though there is an official employee's handbook, none of the employees in the company are really aware of its content. Based on this claim, middle managers and subordinates were asked for their knowledge regarding the company's employee handbook in subsequent rounds of interviews. This process ensured that relevant information collected at any level of analysis was later presented to the other levels so that it could be cross-referenced and cross-examined. A multilevel case study, ranging from subordinates in the organisation to the institutional influence on the studied managers, allows for a more holistic understanding of the current phenomena.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are present in every research project. These issues are quite often related to the dichotomy found in the privacy rights of the participants and the researchers' desires to use the data collected (Orb et al., 2001). When conducting research from a feminist perspective, there are four potential ethical models that the researcher could follow: a universalist perspective

which views ethics as a standard position and applicable across contexts; a utilitarian view that judges ethical issues based mostly on their outcome and not on their intent; a virtue of ethics, which focuses on the values of the researcher; and finally, the ethics of care that focuses on the actual relationship developed during the research and the responsibility and duty of care of the researcher (Bell, 2007). A feminist ethics of care departs from the abstract concepts of rights and justice, preferring to emphasise the responsibility of the researcher and a caring relationship.

The ethics in this case was guided by questions such as “What is the context for the dilemma in terms of the specific topic of the research and the issues it raises personally and socially for those involved?” (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002: 26). A feminist ethics of care has a corresponding concept in Confucian philosophy, “*Jen*”. Within its conceptualisation, “*Jen*” is extremely close to the conceptualisation of duty of care from a researcher’s perspective and therefore, it provides an indigenous conceptualisation of the concept, in agreement with the postcolonial stance of the current research project (Li, 1994).

In addition to the ethics of care, a central component of the ethical consideration of the current project is the assurance that participants have collaborated in the data collection process of their own will and by giving informed consent. This means that the participants are fully aware of the aims and objectives of the research and that they understand how their input fits and affects the research project (Kvale, 1996; Marzano, 2007). In addition to voluntary agreement to participate in the current project, participants were made aware that they could refuse to answer any question and withdraw from the project at any time. Moreover, participants were assured that the data collected would remain anonymous by maintaining confidentiality to protect them and society at large from potential harm (Edwards and Mauthner, 2002).

Considering the issues described above, a series of measures were taken to ensure the project was undertaken in an ethical way. These measures fall into the category of what it is classified as “procedural ethics”, meaning ethical issues involving the actual practicalities of how the project is actually run (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Ellis, 2007). These measures were aimed at making sure that the participants gave informed consent, in addition to guaranteeing that participants took part in the current project of their own accord. Based on these objectives, a series of steps were implemented as recommended by Blumberg et al. (2006).

The first two steps were the introduction of the researcher and a brief description of the overall research project. A few days before the interviews took place, an email was sent from the company secretary to all employees, stating that in the following days a researcher from a university in the United Kingdom would visit the company. In this first part of the email, the researcher was introduced, and his contact details were presented. In addition, it was mentioned that the researcher would like to interview some of the people working there, asking for volunteers to come forward for the interviews. An estimated time for the interviews was also highlighted to provide a transparent process, based on the time it took the respondents to answer the given questions in the pilot study. Finally, an overall description of the research project and the type of questions that would be asked was presented.

Based on this, a number of employees contacted the researcher (by email), expressing their willingness to be interviewed. Two of these respondents expressed their support for the project, but stated that they did not feel confident enough to be interviewed for the present case because of their English language skills. These two employees did not participate in the current study.

The subsequent step was to reply to these emails with a tentative time slot for the interview to be approved by each participant. Once the interview slots were agreed, the following step occurred before the interviews themselves. Before starting each interview, the volunteers received one more explanation about the overall research aim and the type of questions that they would be asked; in addition, it was made clear that the interviews were confidential and anonymous. Regarding anonymity and confidentiality, Kvale (1996: 114) states that “confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported”. This and the guarantee of anonymity help to protect the privacy of the participants.

However, in Chinese cultural contexts, confidentiality and anonymity may be even more important as guaranteeing anonymity to the participants of research projects in China can mean respondents will not lose face by providing answers which do not conform to social norms (Stening and Zhang, 2007). This, consequently, helps to obtain more sincere answers to the questions asked and improves the quality of the data gathered. Considering this point, the entire research project was conducted assuring the participants of their anonymity. Similarly, it was also stressed that their participation was voluntary, that they did not have to answer any question they did not feel comfortable with, and that they could withdraw from the interview at any point. Finally, it was stated that the interviews were to be tape-recorded (with their approval), and their explicit consent was recorded just before starting the interviews. The final part of the protocol was to ask the participants’ permission to begin when they were ready.

The aforementioned steps were taken for each of the interview rounds. However, the last round of interviews utilised a facilitator (see section: the use of a facilitator), who has helped in the data collection. In this case, the same ethical protocol was followed; it was made explicit that

the facilitator was working for the current research project, in which most participants had already participated, to obtain informed consent. The final aim of this protocol was to ensure the current research was undertaken in an ethical way and that all participants collaborated of their own accord and could give informed consent (Jamnean and McGhie, 2012). Once the interviews were finished, participants were asked whether they had any questions regarding any aspect of the interview or the project and to raise any potential concerns.

A few weeks after the last round of interviews, a “thank you” note was sent to all the participants of the study, thanking them for their help and providing further details on the current state of the research and how their help positively influenced the study. The final stage of the ethics protocol was to circulate a draft version of the discussion and finding section of this research project to allow the participants a chance to express their view on any potential misunderstanding or misrepresentation (Hesse-Biber, 2014). There were no comments made by any participant.

First level of analysis: interviews with managers and subordinates

The process of data collection for the first level of analysis included three rounds of interviews, carried out over three different trips to Hong Kong during a period of two years. The first and second round of interviews took place during the months of August/September 2012 and August/September 2013. These interviews consisted of semi-structured interviews, and as the research presented here is an exploratory study and relatively little research has been focused on this issue, using semi-structured interviews was the most suitable approach to address the research questions (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Flick, 2009). The research participants comprised 15 ethnically Chinese, Hong Kong female managers, and two of each of the managers’ subordinates, a male and a female, were also interviewed. The female managers were aged in

their mid-forties and the subordinates in their late twenties (for more biographical information, see Appendix A). For all the interviews at this level, the same questions were used.

The aim of interviewing managers and their subordinates was to cross-validate the data obtained from the managers' interviews with the data obtained from their subordinates to identify (in)consistencies and contradictions between the answers. The interviews were conducted in English, which is the second language of all the managers and subordinates. It is important to highlight that at the time of these managers' formal education, English was the language of instruction in Hong Kong. Additionally, English is the working language in the office used to communicate with the majority of suppliers and all of the overseas customers. Therefore, all participants were able to speak English at a proficient level.

Question sources

To better contextualise the qualitative questions within the Chinese conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, two sets of questions were utilised as the starting point for the interviews. The first set was developed based on a number of questionnaires published in peer-reviewed journals: *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, and *Management and Organizations Review*. To start with, the questions used in this study were identified from relevant journal articles which had published these questions as appendices (for further clarification, see the next section). Once the questions were identified, the focus shifted to the understanding and internalizing of what they were designed to measure. Finally these questions, designed as part of a quantitative instrument, were grammatically modified to suit the interviews; for instance, a sentence such as

“my supervisor asks me to obey his /her instructions completely” was transformed to “Do you expect your subordinates to obey your instructions completely? Why/Why not? Can you give examples?” To gain the trust of the interviewees and to help with the data collection, a series of measures were taken in compliance with the suggestions made by Cassell and Symon (2006) such as making it extremely clear that the interviews were anonymous and establishing a time frame for the interviewees.

The first set of questions were adapted from several surveys: the paternalistic leadership scale, a quantitative instrument developed by Cheng et al. (2000) to measure the degree of paternalistic leadership; the “subordinate response scale”, a questionnaire used to measure subordinate response to paternalistic leadership (Cheng et al., 2004); and the “traditional authority orientation survey”, developed to establish levels of Chinese *traditionalism* among the respondents (Cheng et al., 2004). Finally, the gender related questions were based on the questionnaire used by Choi and Chao (2006), which measures sources of stressors for women in China. All of the original articles were written by Chinese scholars educated or trained in the West who, so far, have produced some of the highest quality research in the field. The selection of these articles as the sources of the questions for the semi-structured interviews is directly in agreement with the postcolonial position taken in the third chapter of this work (gender), aimed at looking at the current phenomenon from a Chinese cultural perspective and giving a voice to the studied women.

Pilot test of the first and second round of interviews

Chinese respondents may tend to provide answers that they think the researcher wants to hear; thus, in attempting to address this potential bias, it was suggested researchers conduct a pilot test with local Chinese people who are familiar with the subject and understand the people

who will be interviewed (Roy et al., 2001). The pilot was aimed at tailoring the questions to fit the Chinese culture and obtain more reliable answers.

Following the given advice and to address this potential problem, the questions were pilot tested with five different people including: three managers with a similar background to the actual research participants; one Western scholar with many years of experience conducting research in Hong Kong/China; and finally, a local Hong Kong researcher who also conducts research in Mainland China. After each pilot was completed, participants were asked for suggestions on how to improve the questionnaire to suit the Chinese culture better.

Based on the pilot study, it was evident that some questions needed to be reworded, as some of the questions in the first set were too academic for the managers to understand. In addition, it was highlighted that female managers would not be comfortable disclosing their age to strangers; therefore, it was decided that instead of asking their age, the questions would be changed to how long they had been working in the company and in their current position. Finally, after the first three initial interviews with the managers, it became clear that Chinese managers respond conservatively in an interview setting, by limiting themselves to answering the questions asked but not much more. These interviews were conducted in the meeting room of the company offices and lasted for an average of half an hour. All the interviews were taped with the consent of the participants and later transcribed for analysis.

After analysing the data collected in the first two rounds of interviews, it became clear that a third round of interviews was warranted to enrich the collected data. At that point, this research project was facing what Cassell and Symon (2006) have catalogued as “difficult interviews”. These cases occur when the interviewees give monosyllabic answers to the given

questions, making data collection a difficult endeavour and diminishing the research value of the interview. This interviewee attitude could be displayed for a series of reasons such as unwillingness to cooperate with the research or fear of revealing sensitive information. Once the limitation of the collected data was acknowledged, it was decided to conduct a new set of interviews, but utilising a facilitator to address the issue (Roy et al., 2001).

Third round of interviews

The third set of questions took place during the month of June, 2014. Questions were developed based on the literature review, in addition to issues which had emerged from previous interviews, to address the main issues concerning this research project. The questions ranged from the role of women in Hong Kong society to the influence of the Hong Kong Government (see Appendix D for the complete set of questions). For this last round of interviews, a more general set of questions was developed, but semi-structured interviews were still utilised as this study is of an exploratory nature (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Flick, 2009). In this last case, more general questions were asked to provide more freedom for the participant to express themselves.

The use of a facilitator

A methodological difference between this set of questions and those previous is the fact that in this set a facilitator was utilised. To create a comfortable environment and invite the managers to volunteer more information, a local ethnic Chinese Hong Kong female research assistant conducted the interviews under the close supervision of the researcher. The researcher was not present during the interviews, but these were recorded for analysis. The decision to utilise a local female research assistant as a facilitator was based primarily on two reasons: gender and culture. As presented in the section below, literature on both feminist studies and

research in Chinese cultural contexts provides positive evidence for the use of a facilitator when conducting interviews, when properly used.

From a feminist perspective, it is argued that during any interview process there are artificial barriers based on the imbalances of power created between the interviewer and the interviewee, regardless of gender (Cotterill, 1992). This may be emphasised in highly paternal societies, as in the current study, where there is a hierarchical social order placing women in a lower social category, which translates as a negative influence for the interview process (Fontana and Frey, 1994). However, it has been noted that females may feel more comfortable when interviewed by other females as this can generate a higher degree of empathy by creating rapport among both that could lead to better quality data (Oakley and Roberts, 1981). Consequently, the use of a female interviewer in this instance was aimed at addressing the imbalance and barriers that might exist, in agreement with Critical theory.

From the cultural perspective, a local (experienced) research assistant provides a series of cultural insights and understanding that might help to smooth the interview process and also translate into better data collection; no previous experiences from any “outsider” can achieve this (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999). This is due to the local collaborator acting as an insider being better positioned to navigate the local culture. Examples of the use of a facilitator are: Caldwell, Eckhardt and Bengtsson (2010), who used local collaborators to enrich the collected data; Katyal and King (2014), who reflect on the problems and challenges of conducting research in Hong Kong as cultural outsiders; Cortazzi, Pilcher and Jin (2011), who exposed the differences in data collection when interviewing the same group of participants using the same set of questions; first using a foreigner as the interviewer and then a native Chinese.

The practical implications of the use of local facilitators are an improvement in the trustworthiness of the collected data (Eckhardt, 2004) and an additional perspective, which can help as part of the triangulation process by providing a local perspective at the time of conceptualising the data (Watkins-Mathys, 2007). Finally, the facilitator also reduces the likelihood of incurring errors due to cultural misunderstandings during the overall research process (Stening and Zhang, 2007).

In addition to these interviews, two focus groups were conducted, each of them with four different managers as, according to Twinn (1998) and Watkins-Mathys (2007), Chinese people tend to be more open in expressing their views when being interviewed as part of a focus group. During the focus groups, general topics were presented for discussion, instead of a question by question format, for example, management styles, family arrangements, gender equality, and so on. The focus groups were led by the same female research assistant who conducted the aforementioned interviews. These focus groups were each formed of four participants and each lasted for forty minutes. The focus groups were recorded and later transcribed for the analysis section. Even though some scholars suggest the use of focus groups as a better form of data collection in China, the focus groups were stopped after two groups due to time limitations, but also because no new or better data were being obtained when compared to the individual interviews.

Pilot test of the third round of interviews

Once the final set of questions had been devised and finalised, a small pilot test was conducted. The questions were sent by email to five female middle managers who have a similar background to the research participants but work for other companies. These managers were asked to complete the questionnaire by email and to provide an opinion regarding the questions

themselves. The pilot test resulted in minor amendments to the questions and again, the realisation that Hong Kong female managers tend to give short, rather generic answers. The section below presents the final sample that was used for the present study.

Sample (the current case study)

As the interviews were carried out over a period of two years, understandably the sample of managers changed overtime. The sample for the first two rounds of interviews consisted of 15 managers and 30 subordinates, two subordinates for each manager, one male and one female. Unfortunately, by the third round of interviews, some of the original managers and subordinates had left the company for several reasons and were not available for interviews. Therefore, out of the original 15 managers, only 9 participated in the last round of interviews, and out of the original 30 subordinates, only 22 were still working for the company for the third round.

Based on this, all 9 managers and 22 subordinates were re-interviewed using the new set of questions. In addition, three new managers and two subordinates for each of them (one male and one female) were interviewed using both the new set of questions and the old set of questions. All interviewees were working in the same physical location, as part of the trading business previously discussed in description of the company, where this case study is based.

Second level of analysis: organizational, official HRM policy and interviews

The second level of analysis calls on two sets of data: in-depth interviews conducted with both Alice, the human resources manager, and Eric, the CEO/owner of the company, and the examination of official company documents related to human resources.

Interviews

The aim of these interviews was to understand how company policies affect the development of female managers in Hong Kong, and both the human resources manager and the

CEO of the company were interviewed for cross-validation. At this stage, it is important to stress that access to the company was granted based on the personal relationship between the researcher and Eric, a friendship that predates the current study. There are both opportunities and limitations to be found in relation to the cultivation of friendship between interviewers and interviewees (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). For the present case, the predated friendship was the central factor in gaining access to the company, but it also provided the longest and richest series of interviews: those between Eric and the researcher.

The set of questions asked of the senior managers is subdivided into four sections: the first section asks questions about the company's human resources management policies; the second section deals with the issue of stress and its impact on managers; the third examines official company documents and their objectives and implications for managers; and the last section deals with paternalistic leadership within the company. The last section asks questions aimed at understanding the level of paternalism shown by the management towards all employees and the influence this has on managers, in addition to questions focusing on managerial behaviour displayed by female middle managers in the organisation in general.

Official documents

Official Human Resources policies were requested from the organisation's human resources manager, resulting in the delivery of three documents: an "Employee Handbook", a document named "Acceptance of Advantages by employees", and a letter identically titled as the previous document: "Acceptance of Advantages by Employees". In addition, interviews with the human resources manager of the company, Alice and the CEO Eric, were conducted to contextualise these documents better.

Documents

The Employee Handbook is a fifty-page document laying out, in general terms, organisation policies and how employees should behave in the working environment. It has six sections entitled: Introduction, Employment Practices, Employment Policies, Compensations Policies, Employee Benefits, and Standards of Conduct and Corrective Actions. It is important to remark that at the time of the delivery of the document, Alice, the HR manager, described the document as “just a generic handbook”, and that even though the Hong Kong legislation does not require the company to have one, the company had obtained one as a formality. By obtain, the manager meant to acquire/copy a standard handbook. The HR manager also stated that she doubted whether the employees knew of its existence and that it was even less likely that anyone apart from her had ever read it within the company.

The Acceptance of Advantages by Employees document is an overall code of conduct, yet it is only a few pages long and touches on a few, very specific points which describe how company employees should behave in a few, very specific cases. Some of the issues that the document touches upon include: bribery, acceptance of gifts, and the holding of confidential information. This document is much more relevant to the employees than the previous one because it has been read and signed by every single employee in the company.

The last document is the letter entitled, “Acceptance of Advantages by Employees Letter”. This document, signed by the general manager of the company, communicates that no company employee is in a position to receive personal gifts and that if suppliers wish to send gifts during the festive seasons (not only Western holidays but also Chinese festivities), they should do so by addressing the overall company. Furthermore, those gifts will be equally distributed among all company employees to avoid conflicts of interest. The HR manager made

clear that it is the responsibility of each team leader/middle manager to send a copy of this letter to every supplier they deal with before the festive seasons.

Non-participant Observations

In addition to the aforementioned datasets, for the first and second level of analysis, observations were also collected. The reasoning behind collating observations is to enrich and triangulate the data collected, and both Yin (2011) and Eckhardt (2004) agree that data triangulation is especially important when conducting qualitative research in China. Based on this recommendation, non-participant observations were carried out by the researcher and later added to the analysis of the present case, primarily as a way to confirm or contradict the interviews. Observations were recorded as notes during and after the observation took place. These observations were conducted at two different stages, the first during the first set of interviews in August/September 2012, and the second during the second set of interviews a year later (August/September 2013). Both periods lasted for a week and are contrasted with the data collected using other methods in the analysis chapter (Silverman, 2013).

Third level of analysis: Hong Kong Institutions

A further two sets of data were collected for the third level of analysis, the institutional level. The first set of data consists of two in-depth interviews with two spokeswomen, one from the Equal Opportunities Commission, Devi Novianti, a governmental body, and another from The Women's Foundation, a stakeholder institution. The second dataset consists of official government publications, including an analysis of governmental institutions which influence the working conditions of women in Hong Kong, and a review of current relevant legislation in Hong Kong.

After an extensive analysis of the official government publications issued to deal with the role of females in the workforce, two single publications were identified as relevant to this study. The first was a booklet called ‘Equal pay for Equal work for Equal value’, an eleven-page booklet published by the Equal Opportunity Commission in December, 2008. In the booklet, the topics equal work, equal pay and equal value are explained in a very plain and simple manner, with the use of pictures on every single page of the publication to illustrate the main points. In the last section, an explanation of how to lodge a complaint is presented. The entire document is in English, and versions in other languages were also printed. The second publication is a booklet from the Hong Kong Labour Department entitled, “Good people management and family friendly employment practices”, specifying what the department calls ‘family friendly employment practices’.

For the legislation section, the analysis commenced with the first relevant piece of legislation for this case, the Bill of Rights Ordinance, enacted in 1991. The aim of this legislation was primarily to ease the high level of anxiety expressed by the inhabitants of Hong Kong after the incidents which accrued in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, in 1989. Even though this legislation was conceived with mostly other aims in mind, it includes some relevant elements such as some anti-sex discrimination regulations.

Following this, two more relevant ordinances were added to the analysis: the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, passed in 1995; and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance of 1997. As a consequence of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, in 1996, the Hong Kong government established the Equal Opportunities Commission, a statutory body responsible for implementing the Sex Discrimination Ordinance and the creation of a code of practice. Both the

commission and the code of practice are pertinent to the current research. Additionally, in 1996, the government decided to join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which makes this international treaty an integral part of the Hong Kong legislation. Figure 9 summarises the level of analysis, the unit of analysis, and the respective data.

Figure 10: Research design by level of analysis, unit of analysis and data collected

Level of analysis	Unit of analysis	Data collected
Third level	Institutional	Review of the legislation, and publications, by the government and by interest groups, interviews with stakeholders and government officials
Second level	Organisational	Official documents and interviews with the human resources manager and CEO of the company, observation
First level	Managerial	Interviews with managers and subordinates, observation

Source: Own elaboration

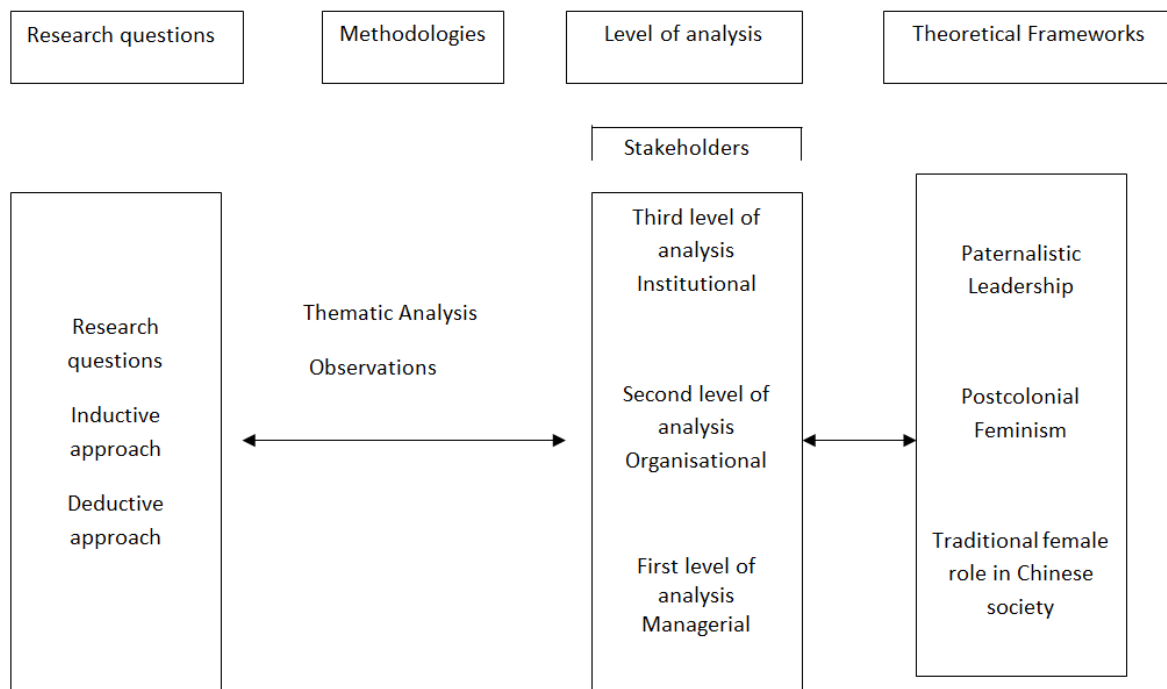
Research framework

The research framework presented below introduces an explanation and rationale for the current study, presenting the role and relationships between each section of the project. The framework takes the three research questions and the inductive/deductive approach to their answers as a point of departure.

To answer the given questions, a series of methods were used. The grounds for using different methods is directly linked to the type of data collected and the nature of the questions to be answered. Non-participant observations and thematic analysis were employed at the three levels of analysis, encompassing all of the collected data (see Figure 7 for thematic codes). As

previously explained, this study is a multilevel analysis, which aims at collecting data from different levels of Hong Kong society and triangulating that data to enrich the answers to the research question. In the framework, the three levels of analysis are presented in a hierarchical order, leaving the stakeholders outside the box. This is done purposefully to show the stakeholders as pressure groups that influence all levels of analysis in this study without belonging to a specific level. Finally, the last section of this framework is the presentation of the theoretical frameworks used in this study, and shaping the answers to the research questions.

Figure 11: Research framework



Source: Own elaboration

Research questions, datasets and methodologies

The current study aims at answering the research questions previously presented. To do this in a holistic way, the current study has been divided into three levels of analysis, and for each level of analysis, a specific set of data has been collected. However, when answering each of the questions, all the collected datasets are utilised. This approach to the data analysis aims at understanding how each level of analysis impacts on the other. Furthermore, data will be triangulated in two different ways, at each level of analysis: first, hierarchically from senior managers to middle managers to subordinates; and second, longitudinally, comparing and contrasting the results of the interviews with managers, subordinates and senior management.

Ultimately, the goal of this exercise is to establish consistency, cross validation and find potential contradictions, while simultaneously providing richer answers (Antonakis et al., 2004). Even though the questions call upon all the collected data, each level of analysis corresponds to a specific set of data, the main source of data for the given question. The following section links the datasets to the research questions they intend to answer and the theoretical framework used for its analysis.

Coding themes for the thematic analysis

This section introduces the initial codes forming the thematic coding of this research project, but these codes were just the starting point in the coding process. Arriving at the final coding scheme involved the elimination of some of the initial codes and the inclusion of some new codes that emerged during the coding process. All the codes were given a clear description. The original codes were described before the coding started and the emergent codes were presented with a description after they have emerged. Yet, eventually, all the descriptions of the codes were reviewed and readjusted at the end of the coding and analysis process (Bryman and

Bell, 2011). The coding and data analysis of the data were conducted following the procedure described by Carsten et al. (2010) and Peus et al. (2014), as they present a clear example of thematic and content analyses published in top journals.

Initial codes employed in quantitative thematic analysis should be derived from theoretical models (Floick, 2009); consequently, the initial codes in this study are directly linked to the theoretical framework. The development of the initial set of codes was primarily guided by the theoretical framework (explained in the previous chapter), which formed the first steps in the coding process (Bazeley, 2013). This thematic analysis was conducted based on an inductive/deductive method; deductive, by coding the information using existing codes, drawn from the literature review, and inductive by creating new codes based on the observed data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2008).

The thematic coding of the data started in a deductive way. The first set of codes are based on both the elements that form the model of paternalistic leadership presented by Farh and Cheng (2000), and elements identified in the traditional female role in Chinese society. The initial codes are grouped as they were identified in the theoretical framework (see Figure 11 for initial thematic codes) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Concepts shared by both theories are: familism, the norm of reciprocity, and interpersonal harmony, benevolence, and morality. Concepts that are present in paternalistic leadership but which lack a corresponding equivalent in the traditional female role are: organisational factors of the model, personalism and particularism, and the expected subordinate behaviours.

Ultimately, factors that are present in both theoretical perspectives but consider from different perspectives were created, aimed at establishing whether they fit the model of

paternalistic leadership or the traditional role of women in Chinese society. These are: respect for hierarchies, leadership by virtues, the authoritarian domain of paternalistic leadership, and the female role in society. In addition to these initial codes, three further codes were added: Confucianism, kindness, and loyalty, which are based on the traditional Chinese roots, as discussed in the literature review. Furthermore, issues concerning female managers were converted to codes, as they are presented in the literature review, and were found in the third round of interviews. These initial codes are: Women as managers' self-image, Subordinates' perception of women as managers, and Challenges that female managers face.

Following this, for the company level of analysis, two initial codes were applied: company policies helping female managers fulfil their family responsibilities (code called positive policies), and company policies limiting the development of women as managers (code called negative policies). Finally, for the Institutional level of analysis, the initial codes are: positive government actions towards the development of women as managers, and negative government actions towards the development of women as managers. As part of the inductive/deductive nature of the approach taken in this thematic coding, new codes emerged from the data, (see Figure 12 below), and the initial codes' organisational factors and institutional theory were discarded (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Figure 12: Initial codes

Area of analysis	Codes	Sub-codes
Initial Codes based on the model of paternalistic leadership and the traditional role of women	Concepts shared by both theories:	Codes: Familism. The norm of reciprocity. Interpersonal harmony. Benevolence. Morality
	Concepts that both theoretical perspectives share but consider from different perspectives (traditional female role)	Codes: Leader behaviour. Authoritarianism. Respect for hierarchies. Leadership by virtues. The female role in society
	Concepts that both theoretical perspectives share but consider from different perspectives (paternalistic leadership perspective)	Codes: Leader behaviour. Authoritarianism Respect for hierarchies. Leadership by virtues. The female role in society
	Concepts that are present in paternalistic leadership but which lack a corresponding equivalent in the traditional female role	Codes: Personalism and particularism Organisational factors: Family ownership, Uniting ownership with management, entrepreneurial structure, Simple task environment and stable technology Subordinate responses: Respect and identification. Dependence. Compliance Indebtedness. Obligation to repay
	Chinese culture codes:	Codes: Confucianism. Kindness. Loyalty
Women as		Women as managers' self-image Subordinates' perception of women

managers issues		as managers. Challenges that women managers face: Home. Challenges that women managers face: Work
Codes below were initial codes, yet eventually omitted		
Organisational Factors		Positive influences of the organisation on managers. Negative influences of the organisation on managers
Institutional theory		Positive government actions. Negative government actions

Source: Own elaboration

Figure 13: Emergent codes

Codes	Sub-codes
Domestic helpers	
Equality issues	Organisational level. Institutional level. Managerial/subordinate relationship.
Traditionality	Organisational level. Institutional level. Managerial subordinate relationship
Loyalty	Personal. Family. Towards the organisation
External Influences	British. Chinese
Working environment institutional influences	
Organisation working environment	Promotion and hiring of staff. Family-like environment. Western influences. Training and development. Hierarchies in the organisation. Differences among genders. Organisational support. Differences in salaries. Bribery; The female advantage
Attitudes of female managers	Work responsibilities. Family responsibilities

Source: Own elaboration

Coding and analysis strategy

As mentioned, during the coding stage of the data analysis, the relevance of the initial codes from the literature were either confirmed or rejected; consequently, some of the initial codes were discarded and new codes emerged, based on the data collected. The new codes had first to be assessed for relevance to the current study and later categorised as sub-themes emerged. For instance, as part of the emergence code it was clear that these attitudes could be further coded into work and family attitudes. Finally, relationships and relevancies of the codes were drawn as a way to organise the data and avoid overlaps and repetitions of concepts (Carsten et al., 2010).

Original Sample versus Current (sample) Case study

The sample leaders used to develop the theory of paternalistic leadership were male owners of the businesses in which they were working. The majority could be described as the first born son working in family SMEs, in the manufacturing industry in the late 1970s, in Taiwan. From these leaders, who were studied to develop the theory, the sample was extended to Chinese overseas communities in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong, who shared almost identical cultural characteristics (Westwood, 1992).

After China opened itself to the outside world, the theory was applied to samples of the Mainland Chinese population, and tested not only in family businesses, but in a wide variety of businesses, ranging from fully foreign owned subsidiaries of multinational companies doing business in China, to government owned and managed, Soviet modelled enterprises. In most of these cases, the original figure of the owner of the family business became replaced with the figure of the middle or top manager. Consequently, the theory has developed and been accepted as a general theory of management for Chinese cultural settings (Chen and Farh, 2010; Wu and

Xu, 2012). The current sample takes a Chinese cultural setting, Hong Kong, but which has undoubtedly been heavily influenced by its former colonial ruler, Great Britain, and uses a Chinese female sample.

Reflexivity

Social constructivism views knowledge as co-created through interactions between the researcher, the participants, their relationships, and social factors. In this case, as a western male, conducting interviews with ethnic Chinese female managers in Hong Kong, my personal singularities inexorably affected the collected data. This was evident when a local female facilitator interviewed the same managers with the same set of questions and obtained different answers. Within my critical theory approach to this work, it is necessary for me to state that the collection of data, analysis and interpretations done in this thesis are neither definitive nor exhaustive. These are a practical and biased part of a contingent process and account. Therefore, if I were to do it again, I would get different results as reality and knowledge are constantly co-constructed in different ways. However, to increase the trustworthiness and integrity of the current research, it is necessary to engage in a reflexive process, analysing how different factors interplay in the current project and affect the creation of knowledge (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity, in research practice, is based on questioning the relationships between ourselves, in this case the researcher, the audience, and the research participants, the people who were interviewed for the current thesis (Haynes, 2012). Yet, a thorough reflexive account should also include a consideration of the Hong Kong society in general, as well as the theories and approaches adopted, paternalistic leadership, a feminist postcolonial approach and the social world. In essence, reflexivity is concerned with how knowledge is constructed (Cunliffe, 2011). The practice of reflexivity within research aims at exposing hidden alternatives, acknowledging

epistemological limitations and empowering voices that struggle to be heard, providing a self-critical view of the research that has been conducted (Lynch, 2000).

The objective of conducting a reflexive exercise within this thesis is to enhance the overall research process. Reflexivity should not only question the truth of the claims made by the participants, but also question the claims of the researcher and the construction of meaning, creating a more critical account of reality (Cunliffe, 2003). The activity of reflexion has been addressed by many disciplines from different angles such as philosophy, linguistics and anthropology, among others. However, defining reflexivity remains a difficult endeavour and with this in mind, the current section focuses on reflexivity as a way to question the ability of the research to capture the complex, interactional and emergent nature of the phenomenon in question (Cunliffe, 2003).

Based on the presented importance of being reflective in qualitative research, the current project incorporates a reflexive account of the process and outcomes of the current work, focusing also on the usefulness of the research (Learmonth et al., 2012). The central aim of this section is to present a critical review of the process that has been undertaken in the developing of the current thesis, placing most of the emphasis on what has been done well, what could have been done better, and the overall learning process that this thesis has offered.

I have to acknowledge that knowledge is co-constructed in the interview process and because of a postcolonial feminist theoretical perspective, my personal characteristics as a western male that initially made me see the object of my study, the Hong Kong females, as the Other, and the same may be stated for the managers' views of me. My data collection was deeply influenced by this dynamic of Othering. I was a man using postcolonial feminism in my research,

which has helped me to realise how “blind” I was concerning certain gender issues relating to women, and also how much I have been able to change in my views. This dynamic created limitations (acknowledged and addressed by the use of a female local facilitator), but also allowed me to obtain more detailed explanations of certain issues. This was based on the assumption that I knew nothing about their culture and way of life, often leading to phrases such as “Let me explain to you because you are not Chinese”, or “any Chinese person would know that but I will explain”, and consequently, a more contextualized explanation.

As a male researcher, coming to this field looking at these issues, in this particular context, these are my values, prejudices and biases and I have to acknowledge this, in addition to my gender-blindness (Whitehead, 2002), as a male researcher. This has influenced the process. Furthermore, it is also essential to also acknowledge that each participant is unique, and that they have their own singular understanding of the questions asked; it would be naïve to think otherwise. Therefore, this affected the answers that they provided and inexorably, the formulated concepts addressed in this thesis.

Schon (1984) divided the practice of reflexivity into two stages: reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action; in these cases, reflection and reflexion can be used interchangeably (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). Reflection-in-action focuses on reflexivity occurring throughout the research process in a simultaneous way, whereas reflection-on-action is based on the reflexive process that occurs once the research has been conducted, in retrospect.

I have conducted reflection-in-action, continually throughout the development of this thesis; however, it is important to state that after I conducted the first two rounds of interviews and after a long reflexion, it became clear that I needed an external female facilitator to help me

gather more data. This measure is not only supported by some of the feminist literature (Cotterill,1992), but also a way to gather and co-construct data from a different perspective. For detailed examples and arguments on men doing feminist research Bailly (2014) is especially insightful as she analyses different roles that men might play in feminist research, from a supportive role to the development of a profeminist ‘men’s movement. From my part, as a men doing gender research, I am supportive of feminist goals like gender equality.

The data that I collected were clearly the data collected from a Hong Kong outsider. The help of a female local facilitator, utilising the same questions, co-constructed data gathered from an insider in the culture. The insider-outsider dynamics helped to bridge the limitations that each form of collection of data has. For instance, the outsider role was often positive because it led me to more contextualised explanations, but also, as an outsider, quite often, my questions were answered with the phrase, “It is a Chinese thing” as a way to tell me, “You are an outsider, you cannot possibly really understand this issue and I do not know how or I do not want to explain it to you”. This could also be interpreted as a way to engage in strategic essentialism (Spivak,1988) and avoid giving a personal answer to the question. I do not think that my analysis and discussion section are a fair reflection of the number of times that I had to face these answers. Yet, the facilitator, as an insider, never received this comment as an answer. Consequently, this insider-outsider dynamic has led to the collection of richer data because the limitations of the insider were complemented with the strength of the outsider and vice versa.

The use of a local female facilitator also acknowledged one personal anxiety, my concern that as a western male, I probably am gender-blind to some of the female singularities. My

inclusion of her in the data collection process partly addressed this concern in the same way as it enriched and provided the research project with a new dimension.

Conclusion

The following Chapter contains the analysis of data. This is organised in three chapters, each focusing on a specific section of the research. The first chapter focuses on the traditional values and loyalty within the selected company; the second focuses on the specific organisational arrangements; and the final chapter is centred on paternalistic leadership and female managers. The entire analysis is conducted utilising a postcolonial feminist lens, which is concerned with ‘hearing’ the views of the local participants and also supports research from an indigenous perspective.

Each chapter within the analysis calls upon several sources of data collected as a multilevel case study (for a detailed account see methodology section). The managerial level consists of interviews with fifteen ethnically Chinese female middle managers, in addition to thirty interviews with two of their subordinates, a male and a female. The organisational level is formed of interviews with Eric and Alice, the senior management of the organisation, who offer insight into the impact of the organisational arrangements on the female middle managers. Both Eric’s and Alice’s perspectives are contrasted with the views of the middle managers, and supported with official organisational documents. Finally, interviews with government officials and interest groups, in addition to their official publications form the institutional level and complete the multilevel case study.

Chapter 5

Analysis of findings:

Traditional values and conceptualisations

Introduction

The current chapter starts by focusing on the traditionality of the participants of the study; Chao et al. (2010) have established that the more traditional a person is, the better he or she reacts to paternalistic leadership. Within this chapter the focus is mostly on how paternalistic leadership is applied from the top of the organisational hierarchy, rather than how the female middle managers utilise or refrain from utilising paternalistic leadership on their subordinates.

Bearing this in mind, the chapter analyses the traditionality of the managers who took part in the study, before moving on to study the working environment where the managers work and then analyse the institutional and organisational levels. Loyalty is also examined as it emerges that it has traditional and more modern components. Three different types of loyalties are identified. The chapter uses a feminist postcolonial perspective for the analysis of the collected data to present the women's points of view.

Traditional values

Within the context of the study, traditionality refers to how close a person is to traditional Chinese values and beliefs. As presented in the literature review, the level of traditionality of a person has a direct impact on his/her response to paternalistic leadership; the closer the person is to traditional Chinese values, the more relevant paternalistic leadership becomes (Chao et al., 2010). In addition, an understanding of traditionality may allow a better comprehension of the traditional role of women in society.

During the interviews, participants were asked a series of questions to establish their Chinese traditionality. These questions can be grouped into two sets (for the full set of questions on traditionality see Appendix C): The first set of questions was based on those presented by Farh et al. (1997) in their quantitative study, utilised in research on paternalistic leadership to establish the traditionality of Chinese participants. Using the original questions as a guide, these were modified to suit interviews and added to the question pool during the interviews with managers and their subordinates. Interestingly, once the original set of questions was analysed, it became evident that these questions were based on the five cardinal relationships discussed in the literature review: ruler to ruled, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother and friend to friend (Tang et al., 2010). On this basis, it was decided that it would be pertinent to ask the participants not only about their views on the modified Farh et al. (1997) questions, but also to ask them directly about their views on Confucian relationships. Consequently, for the second set of questions on traditionality, every participant was asked directly about his/her views regarding each of the five Confucian cardinal relationships and their relevance to contemporary society.

Overall these two sets of questions attempt to evaluate the views of participants on traditional Chinese values from two separate stances: first, from a personal stance, by asking them direct questions that they could relate to, based on the questions from Farh et al. (1997); and second, in a more detached way by asking questions that were less personal, focusing on Confucius, the classic writer and philosopher in Chinese society who is learnt about at school. Therefore, traditionality is evaluated from two different perspectives: a modern day contextualisation of the five cardinal relationships and a direct reference to them.

The answers to the first set of questions (contextualised questions) show consensus among all participants, managers and subordinates on the relevance of the principle behind the statements in contemporary Hong Kong society. For instance, Elizabeth (manager) highlighted that: “Disputes don’t always have to be solved by a senior member, but it was a good idea”. In addition, Mandy (manager) expressed that: “Women should not subordinate themselves to anyone, but it’s important to respect fathers and husbands”. Also, regarding respectful behaviour, Selma (manager) articulated: “Not necessarily, there should be a respect for people just because they are old, but it’s important that children learn how to respect older people in society, there are many spoilt kids today in Hong Kong who don’t respect anyone”. While participants acknowledge the relevance of the principles, they refrain from accepting them unquestioningly. Managers understand traditional values in a hybrid way, accepting but also constraining and contextualising them. In a way, participants show how they sometimes adhere to the dominant conceptualisation, in this case the importance of Confucian values, but also how they invariably depart from it.

For the second set of questions (Confucius cardinal relationships), participants such as Winnie (manager) acknowledged that: “The five cardinal relationships are important to today’s Hong Kong”. Yet the interesting part came later with, “because we learn them at school”, as if the fact that they are taught at school is enough evidence for them to be relevant. Overall, the participants displayed a more critical view of the relationships when they were contextualised in modern day questions and no explicit reference to Confucius was made. Winnie’s remarks regarding cardinal relationships and school were echoed by other managers such as Tina:

Tina (manager): “Ha-ha five cardinal relationships, we learn them at school here in Hong Kong”.

Interviewer: “Did you go to a special school?”

Tina (manager): “No... we all do it, it’s normal in Hong Kong, we all learn and study Confucius and his teachings at school and [we] learn of their importance”.

Furthermore, the participants chose to group the five cardinal relationships as a unified concept, instead of looking at each of them individually, providing only unified answers for all five relationships.

Interviewer: “How relevant do you think that the five cardinal relationships are today?”

Sarah (manager): “They are part of Chinese culture as we learn them at school”.

Interviewer: “I understand, but are they relevant in today’s society?”

Sarah (manager): “Maybe, if we learn that at school it’s because they might be correct. There is some wisdom in them”.

Interviewer: “Now, I will ask you for your opinion of each individual relationship and how relevant you think this specific relationship is to today’s society. Ruler to ruled?”

Sarah (manager): “All the relationships are relevant, it does not matter which of them you ask me, as I told you” [...] “They are part of Chinese culture and we learn them at school”.

Remarkably, the principles of both sets of questions are the same: the five cardinal relationships originate from a traditional, recognisable source, a philosophy which Chinese students learn at school and hold in high regard. The primary difference between these sets of questions is that the Farh et al. (1997) set, asks questions in a direct and personal way, and participants must answer from a personal point of view, whereas, even if the participants were asked personally about the five cardinal relationships, they chose to answer them as members of the Chinese collective culture.

The second set of questions attracted answers which are socially expected, in agreement with the findings of Roy et al. (2001), who stressed that part of the difficulty when conducting

research in Chinese cultural environments is the tendency of participants to answer what they think the interviewer wants to hear; in this specific case, what they learnt at school. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, this could be seen as an attempt to mimic and adhere to the dominant conceptualisation, as learnt at school, about the importance of Confucian teachings..

If it is assumed that for the second set of questions the participants answered what they considered the interviewer wanted to hear and only the first set of questions, the contextualized, are analysed, it is possible to accept that the traditional values of Chinese society are still a relevant part of contemporary society. However, it is clear, from the answers given, that the relevance is not straightforward and all participants have, in some way or another, questioned the full extent of the statements. Finally, it can be assumed, that the relative relevance of traditional values presents a picture where participants are more perceptive to paternalistic leadership, as described by Farh et al. (1997). Based on these findings, the section below will focus on the overall traditionality that the managers influence and are influenced by from an institutional and organisational perspective.

Working environment and traditionality

This section analyses both the organisation used for the current case study, and Hong Kong from an institutional perspective. The aim of this section is to establish the level of traditionality displayed by the organisation where the managers' work. The objective of analysis is to discuss later how the traditionality of the organisation and institutions in Hong Kong affect ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong.

Working environment at the organisational level

The current section starts by taking a holistic view of the organisation and its internal dynamics. As a point of departure, this section analyses the answers given by the participants when asked if the company aims at fostering a harmonious working environment, as the expected organisational behaviour described by Farh and Cheng (2000), in their conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. Therefore this section also analyses if and how the organisation utilises paternalistic leadership on the middle managers. In line with the multilevel approach to the current study, both Eric and Alice (as part of the top management team) were asked whether there is a harmonious working environment in the organisation. Their answer was a straightforward “yes”; it was clear to them that the company has a harmonious working environment.

Furthermore, similar straightforward answers were given by the middle managers and subordinates, with the only exception being two subordinates and a single middle manager (Mandy) who answered, “I am not sure”. Even when the question was further explained, these participants were not able to provide a clear answer. Arguably, the participants who did not understand the question regarding a harmonious environment may have simply not understood the question; but they may have internalised the concept to such an extent that they can no longer conceive of any alternative, in a way becoming blind to possible environments and accepting a harmonious environment as the norm. In contrast, another possible explanation could be that these participants did not believe that there was a harmonious working environment, but they were reluctant to express this openly. Therefore, pretending that they did not understand the questions might have been a way to express disagreement in a harmonious fashion, in a non-confrontational way; a harmonious way to show disagreement towards the idea of harmony.

Most participants expressed a positive view towards harmony, an expected and desirable Chinese social value, and a central element of the dominant conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. However, those participants who did not provide a positive answer may show that not everyone in the organisation is willing to subscribe to this value, choosing to distance themselves from the idea of harmony.

Even though the majority of participants displayed positive views towards harmony, conflicts are present in the organisation, and vengeful behaviour emerged as a consequence of conflict in the interviews (see section on taking revenge, chapter 6). Whilst not all managers and subordinates admitted to vengeful behaviour, a significant number did. In practice, this divergence from harmony shows that not all employees and, or, more specifically, female managers subscribe to it, presenting agency and even a degree of rebellion towards the idea of harmony. Interestingly, none of the managers made this connection when asked about harmony: the contradiction between harmony as an ideal, and the actuality of revenge in the organisation as a symptom of conflict, emerged during the analysis.

Based on their first answers, the senior managers of the organisation, Eric and Alice, were asked what the meaning was of having a harmonious environment. Both respondents paused and thought about their answers for quite some time, even though they were interviewed separately. Neither was able to give a clear, straightforward answer of what it actually meant, as if the idea of a harmonious environment within the organisation was so obvious and internalised that it was unexplainable. The lack of a clear description could be interpreted as a sign of how embedded this concept is and how little they have considered or questioned it. Yet, after a few minutes of reflection, the reasons started to emerge.

Eric (senior manager): “A harmonious environment... we are all like a family... people work better together, [...] and get along better, so it helps with the overall harmony in the office”.

Alice (senior manager): “A family-like environment helps to have a more harmonious environment, [...] also people work better, because they see each other like family and they respect each other more”.

Within the answers given by the top management, it is clear that the idea of being a “family” and having a harmonious working environment are deeply related and interlinked showing a clear presence of paternalism at the organisational level. This is also analysed in the section, “a family-like environment”, where it is concluded that a family-like environment is part of the harmonious working environment.

When middle managers were asked about the work dynamic in the office environment, their answers were also in agreement with the ideas stated by the top management. In addition, a few of the middle managers also added that this idea was present in the day to day rhetoric of the top management. Selma (manager): “[...] And also Eric always talks about being a family quite often and the importance of being close to each other [in the office] as a family, so we can keep the harmony in the office”.

In contrast, when subordinates answered these questions, their answers were mostly focused on the work dynamics of the small teams that they belong to within the organisation, and how the small teams are similar to small families. John (subordinate): “It’s important to keep the harmony in the office, we are like a family, we all get along in the team, Maria [the team leader]

takes care of all of us, helps us and guides us, but I also like working with the other members of the team, we are all supportive of each other”.

An analysis of the official organisational documents yielded a lack of reflection regarding the concern for harmony, perhaps unsurprisingly if the main target audience of the Employees' Handbook is foreign. Yet, overall, there is a strong expectation for the members of the organisation to interact as a family to create and maintain a harmonious working environment, as presented by Farh and Cheng (2000). Consequently, standardizing this type of interaction within the organisation and the interviews clarify an aspiration among participants to fit into the “normal” expected behaviour.

However, a family-like environment in the workplace may be placing women at a disadvantage, as women are constructed as ‘inferior’ to men in traditional roles in Chinese society, and in family hierarchies (Xian and Woodhams, 2008). This cultural arrangement, in addition to the concept of harmony, limits the ability of women to challenge the status quo. When harmony and a family-like environment are promoted among co-workers, harmony limits the possibilities of expressing dissent as it could undermine the harmonious environment, while a family-like environment places women in a lower social position in comparison to men in similar hierarchical positions, also limiting their ability to express disagreement.

Remarkably, despite being disadvantaged, the female managers appear to aspire to fit into this gendered construction of “normality”, thereby reproducing a dominant conceptualisation that privileges the position of men in the workplace. This form of gender inequality can be attributed to a number of reasons: perhaps women feel powerless facing the status quo; perhaps they do not know how to change things; perhaps they are even blind to the situation; or possibly fitting into

the existing social arrangement is more important than changing it. As Liu, Li and Yue (2012) have argued, identity in a cultural Chinese environment is primarily defined by role-based social relations, and in this case managers are motivated to keep their traditional roles as part of their identity. This cultural arrangement inexorably places female managers under a great deal of stress and responsibility as they have similar professional responsibilities to men, plus the added expectation to fulfil their role as women in society, but they are also expected not to challenge the status quo and keep the social harmony.

Working environment at an institutional level

From an institutional perspective, the Hong Kong government has also played an active role in influencing the organisational practices of business in the territory. For instance, legislation such as Family Status Discrimination Ordinance, passed in 1997, and the creation of the Equal Opportunity Commission (discussed in the literature review) are a direct attempt to promote gender equality in organisations. Yet, as discussed in the literature review, authors such as Wing-yee Lee (1996) and Loper (2012) present a rather cynical view of the legislation and government actions, arguing that this was more symbolic than practical. The need for the government to take more action was also stressed by a spokeswoman from The Women's Foundation, Lisa Moore; who highlighted the need for more government actions regarding gender equality issues in Hong Kong. Within this context, workers' unions have very limited power, as discussed by Redding et al.(2013). Unions have a significantly low number of members and very limited influence from an institutional perspective.

In addition to the discussed literature, the Hong Kong Labour Department has been keenly promoting a series of working policies, the most relevant for this research project being the "family friendly employments practices". Supporting this institutional move, a spokeswoman

from the EOC, Devi Novianti, stated that the creation of a model family friendly working environment was an integral part of the organisation's current aims. The similarity of objectives of both the Labour Department and the EOC provide evidence that the creation of a family friendly working environment in Hong Kong is a central objective from an institutional perspective.

Within its campaign, the Hong Kong Labour Department hosted a conference on 11th September, 2013, to promote "family friendly employments practices"; approximately 300 employers, Human Resource practitioners, representatives of trade unions, and employers' associations were invited. Among other actions, the department issued a booklet, entitled "Good People Management and Family Friendly Employment Practices", encouraging employers to adopt a series of family friendly measures. On the one hand, this booklet presents a series of basic ideas of how organisations should have a harmonious working environment. Yet, on the other hand, it provides a series of concrete actions to make the working place more family friendly such as through family leave and flexible working arrangements.

This campaign and the employment practices that it promotes are voluntarist. There is no official legislation to enforce the recommended practices. The government is taking limited action in real terms by only providing suggestions on how organisations should work, leaving the implementation of these suggestions to be decided by each organisation, thereby reinforcing the criticisms presented by Wing-yee Lee (1996) and Loper (2012), who argue that legislation and government action tends to be symbolic.

Several documents have been produced by interest groups urging the government to take action to close the gender gap. The Hong Kong Women's coalition on Equal opportunities, a

coalition of 12 women's rights NGOs in Hong Kong, has submitted a shadow report to the CEDAW committee on the implementation of CEDAW in Hong Kong. The report highlights the need for the EOC to exercise its full range of powers and functions, in addition to properly investigating problematic practices and policies that hinder gender equality (Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities, 2014). This recommendation exemplifies how interest groups are not critical of the commission itself, but rather the way it acts.

The shadow report also recommends that the Hong Kong government refrains from appointing the chairperson or members of the cabinet members of the EOC because it compromises both the real and perceived independence of the commission. This recommendation highlights how the government appoints people to a supposedly independent commission, exposing the government's interests which do not lie in the functioning of the commission but in controlling it.

The same interest groups have also raised concerns regarding the Women's Commission as the enforcing body for the CEDAW convention, and the shadow report suggests that "the government should upgrade the status and revise the terms of reference, the composition and the selection of the membership, and to enhance the transparency and the accountability of the Women's Commission" (Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities, 2014: 6). Whereas, The Women's Foundation, another interest group, in its own report, suggests that "[the commission is] inadequately staffed, resourced and positioned to drive the integration of gender in legislation, public policies and programmes" (The Women's Foundation, 2014: 4). The recommendations made by the interest groups show how, despite the fact that the government has taken active steps to promote gender equality, these have been poorly implemented.

On the one hand, the Hong Kong government produces legislation and takes action to improve the working conditions of its citizens, but most of the legislation and actions are a copy of western legislation. On the other hand, the government does not enforce the legislation, choosing instead to present recommendations that could improve gender equality issues within the working environment; consequently, creating a hybrid working environment where western legislation (former colonial power) is mimicked, but implementation is discretionally left to the local business. This is an example of the voluntarism approach that the government has towards industrial relations which predominates in Hong Kong, as argued by Ng-Sek Hong (2010).

To evaluate the impact of the campaign in the current organisation, both Eric and Alice (senior managers) were asked if they were aware of the campaign, its content, and/or promotional material. Eric mentioned: “I was well informed of it; I have has seen and read promotional material from it”. Alice just mentioned: “I only heard of it”. Regarding the campaign, Eric articulated his lack of surprise concerning its introduction, and proceeded to explain that since the handover of Hong Kong back to Mainland China, the local government has run a social campaign promoting traditional Chinese values in the territory. The aim behind this campaign has been to create a more Chinese Hong Kong society and to eliminate some western influences or ideas. The campaign run by the Labour Department fits perfectly into the overall strategy.

The “Good People Management and Family Friendly Employment Practices” booklet is divided into two main sections. The first section includes four independent prefaces, written by people from the government or labour related groups, focusing on the core values and ideas of having a family friendly working environment. This section is mostly ideological; for instance,

there is the Hong Kong Secretary for Labour and Welfare which writes, “Harmonious labour relations [that] bring prosperity”, or the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare who states that “Cherishing family has always being a core value of Hong Kong society”.

In the second section, a series of actions taken by private organisations is presented as examples of how businesses can implement these values in a practical form. An example of this is HSBC (a multinational bank) in establishing a nursery close to its offices so that employees can stay closer to their children. Another example is the provision of a well-equipped nursing room by a local company so that working mothers can also breastfeed their babies. The values promoted in the booklet, either explicitly in the first section or implicitly in the second section, follow Confucian philosophy. The relationship is such that Confucius and his ideology are explicitly referred to in the booklet, for instance: “South Pacific Hotel launched the ‘filial leave’ in 2005 and has since demonstrated how Confucian values could be applied to hotel management”.

From this booklet, it could be suggested that the Hong Kong government is actively promoting traditional values and making explicit its link to Confucian philosophy. In addition, all of the examples presented are of private sector organisations; there is absolutely no reference to what the Hong Kong government is doing to promote these values within its own context or in regards to its own employees. In Eric’s (senior management) view: “The campaign is a waste of time and resources, because most Hong Kong Chinese enterprises share the core values of the campaign. Yet, unless legislation is passed and the suggested measures to create such an environment become mandatory, the campaign will never have a significant impact” [...] “[This is] because these suggested measures are expensive and nobody want to pay for them”.

From one perspective, Eric's comment highlights a characteristic of the campaign and the attitude of the government. The government wants to be seen to promote and foster a better working environment and the "Family Friendly Employment Practices" campaign is a consequence of this. However, the government also has the power to create legislation, ensuring these family friendly measures are enforced and yet, it does not. The lack of legislation in this area was also a concern expressed by the EOC spokeswoman, Devi Novianti, who stated: "It is hard to pursue these family friendly policies without the backing of any legislation which could help to enforce them".

In a similar fashion, within the organisation's official documents, there is an employee handbook (see section on official documents, chapter 6), in which the company states the provision of a special room for employees who need to breastfeed their babies. Yet, based on the interviews, nobody has ever made use of such a room. However, if the government passes legislation forcing the company to have a well-equipped breastfeeding room, it would perhaps serve more than a symbolic gesture as is currently the case of the clause in the handbook which, according to Alice, was added to make the company look good in the eyes of potential foreign clients, potentially having a real impact on the mothers working in the organisation.

This refusal of the government to take real, significant actions in the regulation of society confirms the arguments presented in the literature review; the government has done enough to be seen to be active, but not enough is actually done to lead to a real difference regarding gender equality, as argued by Wing-yee Lee (1996) and Loper (2012). In essence, the government has a series of suggested policies and practical measures, but leaves the organisations in Hong Kong to self-regulate their implementation, as argued by Ng-Sek Hong (2010). Furthermore, Lisa Moore,

a spokeswoman from The Women's Foundation, stresses that even though the government puts in place symbolic gestures such as that of the new legislation granting mandatory paternity leave, it "doesn't go far enough in terms of remaking scripted gender roles and allowing women to achieve their full potential in the workplace".

It can be concluded that a possible interpretation of this campaign is that of a mere public relations exercise, aimed at providing an image of a government working towards improving working conditions for employees, but in reality, it does not take conclusive action. This conclusion is supported by the lack of government enforcement of the campaign through legislation. Managers and subordinates were asked if they were aware of this campaign but only two managers and five subordinates answered in an affirmative manner. However, none of them had more than a very basic idea of what the campaign entails. Selma (manager): "I think I heard something, but to be honest I don't remember much".

In line with the aim of establishing the traditionality of the organisation, participants were asked how a harmonious environment and also a family-like environment are achieved (in separate questions); managers and subordinates mostly focused on the need to treat everyone in the organisation as a family member, reinforcing the concept of familism, as presented by Farh and Cheng (2000). Cindy (manager): "The important thing is to treat people like family members, so we all get along". Eric and Alice were also asked and both senior managers stated that this is the way in which people work in Hong Kong. Eric mentioned that this is a "Chinese thing". This answer, unfortunately, does not leave much room for explanation but reveals how this concept is highly internalised and difficult to explain to outsiders. What Eric provided was an example that helps to illustrate the idea of having a family-like environment, presented and analysed below.

Red envelopes and a family-like environment

As part of his example of how the company has a family-like environment, Eric (senior manager) stated that in China, there is a family tradition concerning the giving of gifts. It is a widespread custom in Chinese cultural society for married couples to give unmarried younger relatives red coloured envelopes, called *Lai see* (利市/利是), during the Chinese Lunar New Year. These envelopes contain money. The aim of the act is to wish the recipient good luck and ward off evil spirits. Eric replicated this by personally giving every single person working for him a similar envelope to those that he gives to his family members. This is a representative ritual. When asked about the money that each envelope contained, the consensus among participants was that the money was not really relevant; it was just a symbolic gesture. As Eric (senior manager) stated: “[These rituals] are way of creating a nice working environment in the overall company”, whereas Man (middle management) expressed: “Envelopes bring us together as a family; it’s a way for Eric to show his appreciation and to take care of us; the money in the envelope is very little, it’s symbolic”.

Eric is one of the very few people in the organisation who does such a thing. According to him, this is “because it’s expected of me as the owner of the company”. Only two other middle managers (Phoebe and Man) expressed at some point that they give red envelopes to people in the organisation. However, the difference lies in who the recipients are and objectives. Eric does it with every single employee, aimed at providing a more family-like working environment and to avoid losing face, as a quotation below from Christy exemplifies, but the two middle managers who do this do this independently, because they have close relationships with their subordinates/co-workers.

Phoebe (manager), during the festive season “I give a red envelope to Emma [also working in the same team] because we are close, like family and I consider her to be my little sister”.

Interviewer: “Aren’t you all supposed to have a family-like environment in the office and to interact as a family?”

Phoebe (manager): “Yes, but my relationship with Emma is bigger, I have adopted her [in a symbolic way], she is like part of my close family”.

When asked if this is a common custom among companies in Hong Kong, Eric (senior management) stated: *“I think it is, but I am not sure how common; I don’t think that multinational companies in Hong Kong would follow this ritual”*. When managers were asked, they confirmed that this is a common custom in local Hong Kong organisations, and also added the idea that failing to do this will incur a loss of face from the top management of the company, something that was not mentioned by the top management of the organisation.

Christy (manager): “I have worked in a few companies before this, all local [Hong Kong] and all do it [give red envelopes] but some of my friends who have foreign bosses don’t receive envelopes. When you work for non-Hong Kong Company, it depends on your boss”.

Interviewer: “And when you work for a local Hong Kong company? How often does this happen?”

Christy (manager): “I think always, otherwise the boss will lose face [in front of his employees] and look stingy with money”.

Interviewer: “Do foreign managers lose face when they don’t do it?”

Christy (manager): “No, this is only for Chinese”.

Based on the answers given by senior and middle managers and subordinates, it can be concluded that giving red envelopes during the festive season is a symbolic gesture which attempts to create a closer relationship between Eric as the representative of the organisation and his employees. Managers and subordinates also appreciate the ritual of the red envelopes as a way for the managers to foster closer relationships. However, this attitude also presents a patriarchal picture of the organisation, where Eric is the head of the organisation but one who also takes care of the members of the organisation, his subordinates, replicating the traditional arrangement of a family within the organisation in agreement with the idea of familism. This attitude helps to perpetuate existing gendered dynamics and arrangements and discourage change.

From a postcolonial feminist perspective, as the head of the organisation, Eric displays the expected traditional behaviour in a Chinese cultural setting, thereby reinforcing a cultural hegemony based on tradition, which managers respond to by reproducing the expected traditional behaviour. The implication of these actions is a reinforcement of a hierarchical patriarchal organisation, where subordinates perpetuate their traditional, expected roles. This traditional organisational arrangement limits both the professional and the personal initiatives of women in managerial positions within the organisation, as most of the power appears to reside at the top of the hierarchy. In addition, it reinforces the traditional role of women in Chinese society being second to the man who is in the top position in the organisation, holding absolute power. It also prevents women from speaking up and promoting change as the patriarchal figure does not accept dissent.

Organisational traditionality

When asked directly about the level of traditionalism within the company, at the top management level neither Eric nor Alice were really sure about how traditional the company is. Eric professed that it is difficult to know what being Chinese is; he was born in and has lived his entire life in Hong Kong and considers himself Chinese, but he also acknowledges that there are many types of Chinese. Yet, sometimes when he is in Mainland China, he observes how Chinese people have changed and thinks that Hong Kong is sometimes more Chinese than Mainland China. He thinks that the whole idea of being Chinese is in transition; yet the company, which he set up with the help of his family, reflects a “Chinese logic”, and as most employees are Chinese, he concludes that the company is quite Chinese in its values and management practices.

An example of this is the fact that the organisation aims at employing family members as a way to provide them with a job as Chinese people are expected to help their extended family, but this is also a way for the organisation to secure the loyalty of the people working there, as family members are less likely to cheat the organisation, as Eric has stated. Eric also stressed that “organisational arrangements are a lot more informal than those in western companies”, but he thinks that they follow a “Chinese logic”. Alice, in contrast, thinks that the company is as traditionally Chinese as any other company in Hong Kong and stated that “there are many other companies in Hong Kong doing the same work that we do, and we are all, more or less the same, I think that more than being traditionally Chinese we are a traditionally Hongkongese, and the most important thing is that we are able to adapt”.

To clarify the meaning of ‘traditionally Hongkongese and how it relates to the ability to adapt’, further questions were asked, prompting Alice to proclaim that “it is common for Hong Kong people to see themselves as adaptable people; most of the people living here are the direct

descendants of people from [Mainland] China, who arrived here with nothing, not so long ago”, describing adaptability as their common distinctive characteristic.

These examples show how a hybrid organisation has, on the one hand, been created by staying close to “Chinese logic”, but also by stressing indigenous Hong Kong values, creating a third space where tradition and modernity meet, as presented by Bhabha (1994), and within this third space female managers must negotiate their identity as professional women, but also as female members of a family. Yet the central problem for women regarding this process of constant negotiation is that both their expected behaviour as managers and as members of a family quite often lead to contradiction, forcing them to behave in a way that will give rise to conflict. An example of this is overtime. Chinese logic dictates that managers work hard and often long hours, while women are also expected to be at home to care for their children and support their husbands. When managers were asked for their perception of the traditionalism of the organisation, managers who have only worked in ethnic Chinese organisations stated that the company is quite standard for Hong Kong. Mandy (manager): “All my working experience is with local companies [Hong Kong]. I find this company traditional in the same way like all my previous employers”. Interestingly, managers who have previous experience working for multinational (European) companies stressed that the company is quite Chinese in its organisational arrangements. These managers stated that the differences were that European organisations place less emphasis on personal relationships and that job roles and responsibilities in Chinese organisations tend to be less rigid. Phoebe: “This organisation is more Chinese than you think, when I worked for a Canadian company nobody really cared for relationships, it was all about work and who is responsible for what, there was no human touch”.

Finally, the subordinates mostly stated that they were not really sure because they could not really evaluate the traditionalism of the organisation due to a lack of experience working in other organisations. Peter (subordinate): *“This is my first and only job, I think this place is quite normal for Hong Kong so I would say that yes, it’s traditional”*.

As presented earlier in this chapter, it is clear that none of the middle managers or subordinates are aware of the content the employees’ handbook. This fact presents a picture of an organisation as quite informal and “unprofessional” in the way it manages its employee relations, where to clarify issues regarding employee regulations, employees are expected to ask senior management directly. Consequently, this means concentrating more power and influence on the top members of the organisation, reinforcing the role and importance of the leader, as described in the model of paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000), and also presenting a patriarchal organisational arrangement reinforcing traditional social roles. Furthermore, presenting a social dynamic that resembles one of the five Confucius relationships, ruler to ruled, where the ruler, in this case senior management or Eric, dictates the employees’ relations and the rest of the organisation follows his rules (Tang et al., 2010). Yet, as these rules are not formally written or standardised, they could be changed or re-arranged to suit Eric’s needs.

Implications

Based on the collected data, it is possible to conclude that from an organisational and institutional perspective, the ethnic Chinese female managers are exposed to the influence of paternalism and therefore paternalistic leadership. From an organisational perspective, this is clear from the emphasis the organisation puts on areas such as having a family in respect of environment and interpersonal harmony. A clear example of this is the ritual of the red envelopes and also by the evidence that employee relations are based on the views of senior management

and that the members of the organisation are not aware of the content of the employees' handbook. This paternalism in a way reinforces traditional roles in Chinese society as it based on a patriarchal organisational arrangement which privileges male authority and strives for harmony, strengthening a gendered status quo that restricts the scope for women to identify differently in terms of femininity and masculinity.

From an institutional perspective, it is clear that the workers' unions do not have much power, and that actors such as the academic scholars and stakeholders as in The Women's Foundation have been critical of government actions. In these contexts, the Hong Kong government aims at fostering traditional Chinese values, having a formal campaign to promote them. This has an impact on organisations and, subsequently, on middle managers and their behaviour. Based on the analysed data, it is possible to conclude that the idea of having a family-like working environment is promoted at both institutional and organisational levels, consequently influencing the managers.

Through a postcolonial feminist lens, the organisation places importance on traditionality, exemplified by instances such as continuing the ritual of the red envelopes, or promoting harmony. These organisational values condition how female managers should conform to an idea of "normality" about how women should manage their identities as professionals and family members. These organisational norms perpetuate a hegemonic conceptualisation that establishes the importance of fitting into rather than challenging the status quo. However, this analysis also shows instances where this is not the case, as female managers sometimes deviate from the dominant conceptualisation and display agency by, for instance, not being authoritarian with their subordinates (for more information, see the section of authoritarianism). The analysis of the

influences of traditionality at different levels and by different actions underscores the importance of understanding how loyalty plays a role in the current environment. Loyalty is also a traditional behaviour which, based on the analysed data, provides new insight for the analysis of the current case study.

Loyalty

As presented in the literature review, loyalty is a concept that appears in both the framework of paternalistic leadership and is heavily associated with the traditional role of women in Chinese society. The collected data show that the concept is relevant to the present study at a personal and family related level as well as from the organisational perspective. Loyalty emerges as a complex concept from the analysis, which presents three different types of loyalty.

The first type of loyalty that emerges from the collected data is a standard loyalty that subordinates show to their direct manager and that all employees show to the organisation. This type of loyalty is not earned, but socially expected, as described in Confucius' five cardinal relationships (Tang et al., 2010), and the model of paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000), a loyalty towards the position that a person has in the organisation/social arrangement, but not the person him/herself. This loyalty is manifested through the willingness of most subordinates and middle managers to help their managers in non-work related issues and to provide support for them, just because they are their managers, as with the example below:

Ana (subordinate): "If I always take the side of Maria (her manager), even if she is not right; as part of her team, we have to be together supporting her".

Interviewer: "Why do you always have to support her?"

Ana (subordinate): "Because she is my manager and I am part of her team".

This type of loyalty is in agreement with both conceptualisations of paternalistic leadership and the traditional role of women in Chinese society, reinforcing the traditional role of women in society as members of a larger family. Led by a male head figure in a patriarchal arrangement, from the paternalistic view, this loyalty also provides support for the conceptualisation as subordinates are expected to support their leaders under any circumstances (Farh and Chen, 2000). Consequently, when managers and subordinates engage in this type of leadership, they are aspiring to adhere to dominant organisational norms of what is ‘normal’ conduct and behaviour. It is not surprising that female managers display this behaviour as it is in agreement with both dominant conceptualisations. Engaging in this type of loyalty does not compromise the traditional role of women in Chinese society and helps them to fit into the expected “normality”. Interestingly, the same managers do not challenge this expected loyalty. In this case, women are being loyal to someone just because he/she is higher in the hierarchy, knowing that they will never move to the top of the hierarchy due to the nature of the organisational arrangement.

The second type of loyalty is far more concealed, first emerging from observations of interactions between managers and subordinates and later confirmed by participants’ comments. This loyalty is based on the small groups within the organisation, which are not linked to any specific organisational structure and formed only on the pure affinity of members. Consequently, a subordinate might have a degree of loyalty towards his/her direct manager due to company hierarchy, but may also have a personal loyalty towards a subordinate of another group or department because they are members of an informal group. These non-hierarchical relationships

quite often start in the office environment but later develop through social activities outside the office environment.

These extra-hierarchical loyalties cause a series of implications for the managers and their behaviour. This is primarily by pressurising managers to engage in social activities outside work to network with those from other groups and also because these non-hierarchical relationships have implications for future jobs and promotions. Managers expressed that in the event of an opening within their team, they are usually inclined to hire someone from their personal circle of friends/acquaintances.

Tina (manager): “If there is a job vacancy in my team I usually look for someone who I know or someone who is recommended, sometimes we even move someone from another team, like when Sofia moved from another team to work with me; this does not always work this way, but I knew her (Sofia) from the office and when there was an opening in my team I asked her to move here”.

This has been cross validated with the senior management of the company.

Eric stated that: “often, the finding or selection of the candidate will be the responsibility of the middle manager who leads the team. It’s not that we (senior management) don’t have any input; quite often we hire people that I or Alice know and who are totally unknown for the team leaders (middle manager), but overall we allow middle managers to have a say and often to pick their people. I think that this contributes to having a harmonious environment within the teams”.

This second type of loyalty presents an alternative to the type of loyalty conceptualised in the traditional role of women in society and paternalistic leadership. This new type of leadership shows that apart from the standard loyalty, there is presently a different type of loyalty not considered in any of the conceptualisations before, a loyalty based on affinity and personal

choice, giving agency to the members of the organisation within the domain of loyalty. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, this type of loyalty shows the agency that some women exercise in establishing working relationships. Remarkably, this second loyalty is in competition with the previous loyalty endorsed in a dominant organisational construction that states that loyalties are based on hierarchies and direct leadership. Women in managerial positions have the possibility to develop other types of relationships and loyalties, apart from those expected from the dominant conceptualisation. Consequently, the female managers find themselves in a position whereby they must reconcile both types of loyalties, creating a hybrid type of loyalty. The subsequent statement epitomises these issues, showing how a manager negotiates the expectation that she will socialise with her close team, her desire to socialise with people who she has a personal connection, and the limitations that domestic responsibilities place on her time.

Laura (manager): when we go out we have to socialise with mostly the people of our team, because we work together but that is just at the beginning, later on each of us move from talking to the people that we work with to the people we like (from other teams). The problem is that sometimes I have to go home early and I cannot spend enough time socialising with the people from the office that I really want to talk to.

The third and final type of loyalty identified is that of family loyalty, with a series of family connections emerging from the data. Many members of Eric's extended family hold formal positions within the organisation. On the one hand, Eric employs family members because he thinks that they will be loyal to him. On the other hand, due to their personal relationships with the top management, these people can undermine the authority of the middle managers. This situation equates to extra pressure for the middle managers, who must be careful to maintain relations with Eric and his extended family.

Helen (manager): “As a member of Eric’s family I have respect for him as my manager but also as part of my family; because of this I am closer to him than other people in the organisation”.

This third type of loyalty is also in agreement with the type of loyalty expected from the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. However, this type of loyalty goes further and includes the idea of familism also presented in the paternalistic leadership. Familism is presented in the literature review as the idea that Chinese people tend to replicate the basic social structure of the family in every other social organisation. The fact that Eric brings in family members to his organisation shows how he is replicating his family within the organisation, ultimately exercising his duty of care towards family members by providing them with paid employment.

Implications for middle managers

Middle managers face a series of issues regarding loyalty. First, there is the basic loyalty that all the team members must show and this loyalty goes beyond the professional environment to encompass help and support regarding non-work matters. However, middle managers also have to foster and develop their own loyalties through informal groups, which is mostly done socialising outside work, potentially pressurising personal time and family responsibilities (see family responsibilities sections in this chapter). Second, informal groups can become a foundation for career development, especially for those managers who are not related to Eric. As presented in the section ‘Company hierarchy’ (in this chapter), the organisational structure is rather flat and once a manager has achieved the position of team leader (the position occupied by all of the middle managers in this study), further progression is limited. However, members of their informal group may bring them new opportunities when moving to other jobs.

Furthermore, part of the behaviour displayed by the middle managers in the current case study fits into the model of paternalistic leadership and also the traditional role of women. From a managerial perspective, subordinates display the loyal behaviour expected by the model and at the organisational level, as the managers also show the loyalty behaviour presented in the model. From a traditionalist perspective, managers and subordinates also display loyalty to people at higher positions of the hierarchical human interactions. As shown by the second type of loyalty, managers also have agency and create groups based on affinity, therefore questioning both conceptualisations, and presenting a new hybrid aspect to loyalty that was not considered before but is deeply important for the current study. Managers negotiate these three forms of loyalties by respecting the first type of loyalty (the more traditional), complying with social expectations. However, they are also careful when dealing with colleagues who are relatives of Eric, as they could undermine their formal authority, knowing that their main loyalty is to Eric. In general managers tend to interact with most of their colleagues in a formal way, to avoid any problems they tend to err on the safe side of formality. Managers also focus on their personal loyalties, those based on affinity mostly during the informal socialisation process after work. The loyalties based on affinity are not as relevant within the organisation, but may be in the future, for example when a manager is seeking to change jobs.

Selma (manager): “I came to work for this company because when my old manager moved here she asked me to follow her, we were good friends so I came here because of her”.

Conclusion

The current chapter has examined traditionality and its presence within the institutional, organisational and managerial levels. Two very different themes emerged from questions on traditionality: the data is less inclined to show traditional values when the context of the question was contemporary; and those aimed at agreeing with Confucius to achieve “normality”, when Confucius, the traditional dominant conceptualisation, was mentioned.

The working environment has also been analysed holistically, focusing on the institutional and organisational levels. From the institutional perspective, the Hong Kong government presents a hybrid approach to gender equality borrowing legislation from the west, but leaving its implementation to the local business. At the organisational level, it is clear that there is an attempt by the senior management to create a more traditional environment, with rituals such as the red envelope ceremony. Yet, women display agency, sometimes adhering to the expected behaviours regarding their leadership position as presented by Farh and Cheng, (2000) and in other instances departing, for example, by displaying vengeful behaviour. Interestingly, three different loyalties emerged from the data: the first based on the dominant conceptualisation mimicked by the female managers; the second based on affinity; and the third based on family relationships. The mix of the three loyalties leads to the creation of a new hybrid loyalty (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). Managers negotiate these three forms of loyalties creating a new, personal approach to the subject of loyalty and therefore redefining a central aspect of their leadership.

Chapter 6

Organisational arrangements

Introduction

This chapter examines specific organisational aspects of the company where the participants of this research project work. There follows an analysis of the company's organisational arrangements, examining how these arrangements influence the work lives of ethnically Chinese, female managers. The analysis is mostly focussed on how paternalistic leadership is applied by senior management to the rest of the organisation, rather than how the female middle managers utilise paternalistic leadership.

The chapter begins by introducing some official company HR documentation. These documents are examined in all three analysis chapters to triangulate the data; however, it is necessary to introduce the documents here to contextualise them better. Within the documents, bribery emerges as a relevant issue within the organisation (discussed in the section Bribery: the female advantage), where clear but non-official distinctions are made between genders.

The following section examines the more practical aspects of the organisation and their implication for women in leadership positions: Promotion and hiring of staff, Training and development, Hierarchies in the organisation, and Differences in salaries. The last sections, Women as managers, attitudes towards work and family responsibilities, and Challenges that female managers face, at home and professionally, scrutinize how women behave and how they negotiate the different responsibilities and expectations they face. The analysis is carried out through a postcolonial feminist lens.

Organisational arrangements

Official documents

Official organisational documents are examined throughout the chapter and references and cross-references are incorporated where relevant. However, it is relevant to introduce, describe and more importantly, contextualize the documents before beginning the analysis. The objective of this is to better understand the documents and consequently, make better use of them as a means to evaluate the application and relevance of the company's official HR policies and the practical implications of these for middle managers. The three documents utilised are: the "Employee Handbook"; a document entitled "Acceptance of advantages by employees"; and a letter also entitled "Acceptance of advantages by employees".

Employee Handbook

The Employee Handbook is a standard document, written in both English and Chinese, produced by the company that introduces the rules and regulations and is a guide to the acceptable standard of behaviour from employees. It would appear that the primary objective of the document is to provide general guidance for employees. However, Eric (senior manager) admitted that his motivation was to improve the company's image to potential customers, knowing that a number of western companies conduct background checks on the company before doing business. He also added: "I am not aware if the local Hong Kong Government requires me to have one, but if that is the case, I feel covered".

Alice (senior manager) further stated: "There is no legal requirement in Hong Kong to have an employee handbook". This seems to tie in with arguments presented by Luo and Shen

(2012). They describe how the Hong Kong government takes a non-interventionist approach to business regulation. Furthermore, Alice says of the handbook, “I don’t know where it came from; I think Eric might have downloaded from the internet or something like that”. Eric stated: “I haven’t downloaded it from somewhere on the internet as such, ha-ha! I downloaded a draft from a government website and adapted it to the company”.

In terms of employee familiarity with the document, Alice declared that: “Every single employee has signed a copy of it, but that doesn’t mean that they know what is written”. It is company policy that each employee signs a copy of the Employee Handbook when he/she signs his/her contract; however, Alice comments: “I don’t recall anyone reading it. The signing of the handbooks is just a formality”. Later on in the interview, Alice also added: “I am not really sure of what it says”.

When asked, other managers and subordinates backed up the statements given by Eric and Alice. For instance, Christy (manager) stated; “I don’t remember ever seeing any handbook in the office”. Only two managers were aware of the document but both of them were under the impression that the document was part of the paperwork given to potential suppliers and did not see it as part of wider organisational policy and regulation.

Man (manager) stated: “Yes, I remember the handbook. One time a potential customer was conducting a background check on us and together with many other papers, they asked us for this handbook”.

Interviewer: “Do you know anything about the content of the handbook?”

Man (manager): “Not really”.

Interviewer: “Why not?”

Man (manager): “I just signed it; I did not read it”.

It is clear therefore that the handbook plays a very minor role in influencing the managerial behaviour of the organisation, being primarily used as a marketing tool to attract potential customers, but with little real impact or efficacy as an HR instrument. The fact that employees are willing to sign a document despite being largely unaware of its content, and fail to utilise the document as an HR resource, seems to fit with Farh and Cheng's (2000) description of employee behaviour under the influence of paternalistic leadership. As the general manager, Eric acts as the head of the family; he cares about the working conditions of his employees but also reinforces the patriarchal culture of the organisation. Employees who are aware of the handbook do not place much worth in it or make use of the information it contains, preferring instead to direct their questions directly to senior management.

What it is clear from this section, based on the organisational arrangements and interviews, is that in this organisation, middle managers do not have a formal mechanism for addressing concerns about HR policies. The only way to address potential policy concerns is to ask the HR manager directly, thereby increasing the power and authority of senior management. Middle managers are deprived of their right to privacy in reporting their concerns. These organisational arrangements reflect the model of the paternalistic manager as a centralised authority (Farh and Cheng 2000). When middle managers were asked about this, they did not perceive it to be a problem. Most of the middle managers suggested, as Selma articulated, that "it was a lot easier to ask Alice or colleagues any (HR) question".

Within the text of the handbook, distinctions are made regarding gender in only two sections. The first distinction relates to the differentiation between paternity and maternity leave allocation under Hong Kong law. For women, the handbook states that leave will be granted in

accordance with the applicable law, which currently stands at ten weeks. In contrast, there exists no legislation relating to paid leave for fathers. However, the company in this case study grants three days of paid leave. Eric (senior manager) states: “I added those 3 days to be kind, and also because it would look very bad in the eyes of my European customers if I didn’t”. Eric’s desire as the owner of the business and senior manager “to be kind” is also a clear feature of the behaviour expected by leaders within a paternalistic leadership structure, reflecting the personal integrity of the leader (Farh et al., 2008).

After examining both company regulation and the institutional legislation relating to paternity leave, it is clear that they serve to reinforce traditional Chinese gender roles. By granting women more paid leave than men, the government and the organisation reinforce the traditional domestic gender roles, especially the stereotype of the male as breadwinner of the family. Long maternity leave may have a direct implication on women’s careers as they are absent from their jobs taking care of their new-born. In contrast, as fathers have limited paternity leave, their interaction and potential care towards their new-born is limited by time, again reinforcing traditional gender roles regarding care provisions for children. This arrangement also sets role models for the new-born babies who grow up seeing traditional roles are the norm. Consequently, both the organisation and Hong Kong at the institutional level build barriers for those couples who might want to reverse roles.

When Alice (senior manager) was asked for her view on this difference, she simply stated that “this is the way things are” and “I don’t think these differences are a problem in the company”. When asked about the impact of these issues, Alice added: “Sometimes a long break from work for women managers can be seen as bad for their careers, but as far as I know, the

problems come after giving birth (because) the social views after they (managers) give birth may cause others to think that she doesn't focus on her job and that her productivity will be lowered, too many responsibilities (i.e. children and work)".

Female managers tend to be well aware of this social stereotype and the negative impact it can have on their self-confidence (Cooke, 2005). When managers were asked about the issue, a common view that emerged was that having children is a social mandate for everyone but especially for women and because of this, they should be entitled to more maternity leave.

Man (manager): "Women in Hong Kong society are expected to become mothers regardless of their job".

Interviewer: "What about men? Aren't they supposed to also become fathers?"

Man (manager): "Men also, but if a man for whatever reason doesn't become a father, it is not as terrible as if a woman doesn't [become a mother]."

This last testimony, when considered alongside Hong Kong legislation and company policy, presents a picture in which participants feel compelled to reinforce traditional gender roles. Furthermore, it seems that women tend not to question organisational or institutional directives with regards to the differences in maternity and paternity leave but believe they are justified. Lee (2003) stated that even if women in Hong Kong are under a great amount of stress, both professionally and in terms of family expectations, they do not perceive this in a negative way, or as an injustice; consequently, inadvertently maintaining the status quo and perpetuating the gender binaries, where domestic and family responsibilities are mostly allocated to women and where it is also important to become a mother, regardless of other life choices and achievements.

Breastfeeding is another issue tackled in the handbook. Page 29 reads: “Women with a baby under one year old are entitled to two 30-minutes nursing breaks daily. The two breaks may be taken consecutively and are considered as working hours. The company will make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location, in close proximity to the work area, where the Employee can express milk in privacy”.

These special arrangements are solely a company initiative. Currently, there exists no legislation in Hong Kong to address this issue, again reinforcing the arguments presented by Luo and Shen (2012) that the Hong Kong government takes a non-interventionist stance on business regulation. During the interviews, Eric revealed that the section on breastfeeding was included in the handbook at Alice’s request. Eric said: “I don’t really know why Alice wanted to include this in the handbook; I guess that it might be related to a local women’s association campaign in Hong Kong, which aims at promoting breastfeeding”.

The breastfeeding campaign highlights some of the shortcomings of the government regarding maternity issues, which necessitate interest group intervention and promotion. The fact that Eric is aware of it could show the success of such a campaign. Yet, in reality Eric is only aware because Alice brought it to his attention, as he did not recognise that breastfeeding would be an important organisational issue. This is an example of how Eric may be gender-blind to some female needs, and is helped by Alice to make this a part of workplace policy and practice, even if it does little to undermine persistent gendered inequalities between men and women.

When Alice was asked, she stated that she added the text for two main reasons: “It looks good when potential clients scrutinise the company, which happens quite regularly; I wanted to add this section because I think that it will give a more family friendly image of the company”.

The vast majority of the organisation's clients come from western countries, mostly western European, and the fact that the organisation adapts its handbook and policies to suit the expectations of western companies is a clear example of the western influences in the organisation.

Within the same answer, Alice also refers to the company's self-image. She hopes to cultivate a family friendly environment. She thinks that "sometimes male subordinates tend to see their female managers as less feminine". This statement from Alice ties in with the findings of Xian and Woodhams (2008) that female Chinese managers have a fear of losing their femininity. Yet, during the interviews, none of the male participants openly questioned the femininity of any of the female managers. This in itself is not proof, but it is notable that within the interviews, all the references to women looking less feminine were actually made by women. No male subordinate openly expressed that they see their direct manager in a less feminine way, but references were made regarding managers in general. As Tom stated: "I don't like to think of managers as strong (people). I like to think of them in a more maternal way; it helps the harmony". It is curious that Tom's manager is Mandy, who is unmarried and does not have children but he still sees her in a maternal way. When Mandy was asked if she thinks that she leads her team members in a maternal fashion, her answer was, "I don't think I am maternal; I think I am more feminine", in a way showing that what subordinates might see as maternal may be seen by the managers as feminine.

The inclusion of a clause where a special place is allocated for women to breastfeed shows how the organisation aims at creating a more family friendly environment, but the clause also serves to Other women from men in positions of organisational power, by presenting them

as mothers with “special” organisational requirements. Yet, no attempt is made at presenting men as fathers, even though some are. This exposes how, in the minds of the senior management of the organisation (Alice), being family friendly is influenced by dominant gendered cultural constructions that endorse the idea of caring for women who care for children. However, Alice’s actions ignore the possibility that the same could be achieved by presenting male employees as parents in addition to females; or even independently from them.

Francesco and Shaffer (2009) argued that some men in Hong Kong feel intimidated by successful women. Perhaps Alice’s actions are an acknowledgement that this could be the case here, and are an attempt to give the female managers a chance to present a more traditional image of themselves as mother and carers. This idea is supported by Alice when referring to the specific changes that she has introduced to the handbook and to the management of the company in general: “I hope this kind of initiative will recreate a more traditional image of the female managers, more like what females are supposed to be”. This further reinforces the traditional role of women as child bearers in Chinese society and traditional gender binaries where male and female roles are fixed as argued by Lewis and Humbert, (2010). From Alice’s point of view, women are supposed “to be more traditional”. This also perpetuates the status quo in which women are Othered in contrast to men, as they are expected to provide maternal care for their family, regardless of the demands made of them within their professional life. This, in addition to other organisational agreements such as the organisation is in a position as more tolerant towards women with domestic responsibilities, shows that Alice describes the female managers behaving more in a way that is similar to traditional Chinese women rather than behaving in a paternalistic leadership way.

In any case, both Alice and Eric stated that, so far, none of their female employees have made use of this special provision. Alice thinks that “perhaps this is because managers don’t bring babies to the office; if they do, it’s during the maternity leave period only to show their baby to their colleagues but they never stay long”. When managers were asked, it was clear that these women were not happy to breastfeed in public. This is still a taboo issue, not the breastfeeding itself but as Vivien stated: “I would never breastfeed in the office. (...) I would never show my breast in public”.

The inclusion of the breastfeeding clause was included in the handbook to build the company’s reputation in the eyes of potential western customers. However, this breastfeeding clause does not have a real impact on female employees, as many of whom say they would never breastfeed at work. The clause has been placed there to meet western expectation (arguably the handbook exists for the same reason). Consequently, the organisation appears to have double standards: a group of standards displayed in the handbook aimed at complying with western expectations, in addition to an alternative set of standards based on how the company actually functions. This action is a clear example of how the organisation attempts to function in a third space, bringing local and foreign elements together (Bhabha, 1994). On the one hand, employees and the organisation are presented as western, mimicking western expectations and practices. Yet, on the other hand, in reality, the organisation operates in a more traditional Chinese manner. Consequently, a hybrid environment is created, where western exactions are present (especially in the minds of senior managers), but operations are conducted in a more traditional Chinese fashion. This duality actually disadvantages female managers, as actions targeting their wellbeing in the handbook are merely symbolic and they find themselves negotiating both western and traditional Chinese expectations. The organisation’s unilateral

approach to what is written in the handbook and a lack of engagement with women in managerial positions regarding their personal needs limits the ability and agency of women to choose how they identify themselves, as mothers or as professional managers.

Acceptance of advantages by employees

The second document, the “Acceptance of advantages by employees”, is also part of company policy. This document focuses more on illegal activities such as bribery and gambling, and no distinction is made between the genders. The overall objective of the document is to highlight unacceptable behaviour regarding the acceptance of gifts from suppliers, bribery and gambling. Alice explained: “This is the document that we used before the handbook, but we decided to keep it (after the handbook was introduced) also as an official document, just in case”; when asked what she meant by ‘just in case’, Alice simply repeated “just in case”. Based on the nature of the document and the answer given by Alice, it can be concluded that bribery is an issue within the organisation. This was confirmed in a separate talk with Eric, who stated that: “In this business, bribery is always a risk, I trust all my employees, otherwise they wouldn’t be working for me, but still I have to be cautious”.

In addition, Eric was of the opinion that “making the employees sign this document should ensure awareness of the rules and regulations, but also sends the message that the company expects its employees to behave according to the law”. When managers and subordinates were asked, they all remembered signing the document (unlike the Employee Handbook). Some also added that the document was explained to them, in most cases by Alice, at the time they were signing their contract. In addition, all employees were given a copy for personal reference.

Tina (manager): “Yes, I remember the document; it was a long time ago; when I started working in here, Alice explained it to me, but there was not much to explain; it’s very clear, and I signed two copies, one for me and one for Alice”. Based on the collected data, the text of the document is taken seriously by the organisation, which expects employees to comply. The difference in attitude towards the current document shows that it is much more than a mere formality, as is the case with the Employee Handbook.

The fact that the organisation uses a written document which carries legal consequences, is an example of organisational hybridity in its HRM practices. Within the organisation there is a clear departure from traditional Chinese practices where HRM is based on the leader, as present in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership (Wu and Xu, 2012), towards the use of legal documents to warn and legally bind employees of the organisation.

Acceptance of advantages by employee’s letter

The last document, called “Acceptance of advantages by employees’ letter”, is a letter signed by the general manager of the company (Eric) and sent to all the suppliers every year. During the festive season in Chinese culture, it is customary to send and receive presents, especially in business relationships. The letter encourages suppliers not to send any kind of gifts (as a general term), highlighting that employees are not permitted to receive them, and in case any gift is sent to the company, this will be shared between all employees. According to Eric: “The aim of this letter is to discourage the development of ‘special’ relationships between suppliers and the middle manager”.

Alice was asked if she thought that the letter and company policies were effective in avoiding potential situations that might include bribes. She revealed: “I don’t really think so, but

that there are other ways I think can prevent suppliers from offering bribes to managers” (see section the female advantage). Eric thinks that it is “a formality; the letter acts as a legal reminder to the suppliers not to send gifts; I think this isn’t a final solution but it helps”. Middle managers and subordinates were all well aware of the letter. Selma (manager): “We are very familiarized with the letter; every year we send a copy to every single supplier that we work with; the entire office gets an email a few weeks before the festivity season every year, telling us to send it to the suppliers”.

During the interviews, three managers went further than the others when commenting on the letter. They questioned the effectiveness of the letter, stating that they have still been sent personal presents from suppliers. All three managers informed Eric or Alice of the personal gift and its content (most of the time fruit). These were left in the pantry room to be shared among all the employees of the company. Man (manager): “Even if we sent the letters, every year quite often I get something sent to my name; nobody wants to get into trouble for a case of fruit, no matter how nice the fruit is, ha-ha! When this happens, we just tell either Eric or Alice and leave the gift in the pantry, so everyone can enjoy it”.

Implication for managers

The analysis of the formal company documents presents two contradictory issues relevant to the current study. The first is linked to the issue of bribery. Bribes are common in Chinese cultural contexts and there is an extremely fine line between a bribe and a special relationship in a Chinese cultural context, known as *Guanxi* (Nie and Lämsä, 2013). The second issue is centred on the different treatment given to female managers found within a company’s HR policies. From a feminist postcolonial perspective, differential treatment given to female managers could be seen as an attempt to, on the one hand, mimic the expected western behaviours (at least on

paper), but also to Other themselves by implementing a more traditional Chinese organisational environment. Ultimately, a hybrid organisational arrangement is created where these two coexist, but fictitious gender differences based on a perceived incapability of female managers to be bribed are also created.

Two out of the three formal documents collected for the current case study deal directly with issues of employee misbehaviour. Based on the content of the two documents, it is clear that bribery is an important concern for the company. Moreover, that the company is concerned about this issue and takes time during employee inductions to present and explain the documents. In addition, employees are supplied with their own copy of the document and are sent reminders every year.

Of the three documents, two could be classified as internal, targeting company employees, and one external, written with the client in mind. The differing audiences of these documents highlight a double standard within official documentation. The Employee Handbook is aimed at presenting an organisation that mimics western standards (at least on paper), highlighted in clauses such as the room for breastfeeding, which has no real impact on the female managers. Yet, behind closed doors, a more traditional Chinese organisational arrangement is promoted. The consequence of this is a reinforcement of traditional gender behaviours that sustains a restrictive gender binary, but ultimately the creation of a hybrid set of organisational practices.

On the one hand, there are documents that employees are well aware of such as the document entitled “Acceptance of advantages by employees”, but on the other, not all employees are aware of their own handbook. In theory, all of these are equally relevant. Yet in reality, only the internal documents are relevant to the employees and the issues that the Employee Handbook

should regulate are actually dealt with in an informal way, linking in to the paternalistic model of leadership. Finally, as a limitation, only documents supplied by the organisation were analysed. It is not clear whether there are more documents that could also help to understand the organisational dynamics that were omitted by senior management. The following section examines the more practical day-to-day aspects of the organisational arrangements and how these affect ethnically Chinese, female managers. In a continuation of the analysis of the implications that bribery has towards the organisation, the section below looks at bribery and the gender implications of this.

Bribery; The female advantage

Constructed differences between genders were also found with regards to loyalty and loyalty expectations from employees. As part of one of her interviews, Alice (senior manager) stated: “I don’t think that loyalty is related to gender; I trust all the team leaders [middle managers] who are working here, otherwise they would not be working at the company”. However, when asked why most of her middle managers are female, she mentioned: “Maybe, maybe I think I trust more female managers, but I am not really sure”.

The answers given by Alice during the interviews present a picture, where Alice tries to establish that gender is not an issue in the organisation but in the same way, she shows bias towards female managers. Within her statement, Alice presents both an official and a non-official answer to the loyalty issue. Interestingly, Roehling et al. (2001) have established that women tend to display higher organisational loyalty than men, regardless of their marital status. Within her comments, Alice presents herself as a person who talks from her position as a senior member of the organisation, but also as an individual with her own preferences.

Eric (senior manager) agreed that: “Gender is not an issue; commitment and loyalty are not linked to gender, and it varies from person to person”.

Eric’s comment can be interpreted as gender-blind. As a male, he sees being male as “normal” and is therefore blinded to any singularities that not being male might bring (Whitehead, 2002). Consequently, he might not be in a position to see, or evaluate, how being female might add a different dimension to commitment and loyalty. Interestingly, this statement is in contrast with a later comment in which he explicitly described how women are less difficult to bribe than men.

Managers and subordinates also agreed that there is no relationship between gender and loyalty (see section on loyalty). However, having expressed these views, in later interviews it became clear that female managers are perceived to have an advantage over males when faced with issues of bribery. One of the most relevant issues for the company’s senior management is the omnipresent possibility that some of their middle managers might be bribed by one of their suppliers. The organisational concerns regarding bribery are better discussed in the section official documents. In her interview, Alice expressed the view that female managers are less prone to bribery in Chinese cultural contexts.

Alice: “The advantage with female managers is the fact that you cannot bribe them; in general, when managers go on business trips in China [usually doing factory inspections and negotiating with potential suppliers], the hosts [suppliers] first entertain the managers and then pay for some special services for the managers [prostitution]. Once the special services are delivered, both parts know that more money will change hands and that special condition and prices will be given to the suppliers; however, with female managers, you cannot bribe them in this way”.

This statement was followed by a question which intended to establish if this was her personal belief or common in the industry:

Interviewer: “Are you the only Human Resources manager who thinks this way?”

Alice: “Ha-ha, no! This is very common in the industry. That is the reason why so many women are finding jobs as merchandisers”.

Based on these assertions, Eric was also asked for his views on the subject and consequently confirmed both statements: the idea that females cannot be bribed and that this is a common belief in business circles Hong Kong and in Mainland China, which is, in reality, a gender stereotype. In reality, this gender stereotyping of women translates into more business trips, as they are perceived as less likely than men to be bribed and have more pressure on their already limited schedules, taking time away from day to day professional responsibilities and family duties.

Eric explained: “According to business etiquette in China, when two business people meet, one should play the part of the host and the other the part of the guest. These roles are allocated based on who is travelling and who is receiving the traveller; the host is expected to show his facilities and also to entertain his/her guests”.

This description provided by Eric is in agreement with the findings of Zhu (2009) on Chinese etiquette.

In addition Eric stated that: “For these specific occasions, a dinner in a fancy restaurant with exotic food followed by drinks in a karaoke bar is common. It’s common for business developers to travel to remote parts of China and meet with potential suppliers, in order to inspect their factories and potential to deliver what is agreed, the negotiation of prices and conditions is also common on these trips. In China some Karaoke bars work as such. But, many of them offer a range of extra services”.

The last part of this quote shows how a common practice such as singing karaoke in China can be used in a context of bribery.

Eric adds to his description an account of how bribery usually happens in a Karaoke setting,

“The usual way to proceed is to reserve a private room, giving both parties some privacy. These private rooms are served by a number of young girls who are responsible for bringing the drinks, encouraging the people to drink more, engaging in conversations with the clients, managing the karaoke equipment and even singing a few songs if requested by the clients, and quite often these hostesses also double as prostitutes”.

In addition, Eric stated: “The usual way for a host to bribe someone is to take the guest to a karaoke bar, engage in heavy drinking and then offer to pay for them to take one of the hostesses to their hotel room to spend the night with them”.

Interestingly for this situation, the guest does not really need the host to pay for these activities. Yet, this “business ritual” is full of meaning and symbolism. The guest could engage in paid sex independently of the business trip. This person does not have to do this in front of potential business partners. However, this act signals a moral weakness in front of a potential supplier, sending a straight message that the expected moral standards of interaction are being suspended within the relationship. The fact that this morally reprehensible act, at least in theory, is perpetrated by both parts together, one participating by paying for the services and the other by receiving the services, creates a bond, signalling that both are willing to engage in other morally reprehensible activities together. These other activities are most of the time the negotiation of special conditions of the business transactions (bribery).

The case explained by Eric and also independently validated by Alice gives credence to the widely held belief that females are less susceptible to bribery. These two testimonies show

that females are perceived to be relatively new entrants to the business world and still considered outsiders, which makes them immune to the standard mechanisms used in Chinese culture of offering and signalling a willingness to receive bribes: consequently, Othering women from men as ‘outsiders’ within a man’s world (Gherardi, 1995). Middle managers and subordinates were asked about these issues, but mostly their answers were very brief. It was clear that they did not feel comfortable talking about this topic. Phoebe (manager): “I don’t know anything about bribes [...] I have never really heard anyone talking about bribes”.

From a postcolonial feminist perspective, this differentiation towards females and bribery reinforces a gender binary that sustains the idea of women as Other to men. Only a handful had heard of the idea of women being more difficult to bribe and the aforementioned description of how people are bribed. Remarkably, none of the respondents understood this to be standard company policy, and two managers pointed out that there are male and female managers in similar hierarchical positions.

Tina (manager): “I heard the story, here in Hong Kong and also in Mainland China, but I don’t think it’s true; people talk a lot but it does not mean anything”.

With her testimony, Tina states that she is aware of the perception of women in relationship to bribery.

In addition, Tina stated: “I don’t think Eric believes the story, there are also many male managers working in the organisation” [...] “you are not Chinese, so you don’t know... Chinese people love stories, especially stories about things that they don’t really know or understand”.

Tina gave extra contextualisation to her answer, assuming that the interviewer, a non-Chinese, needed to not only listen to the semantics of the answer, but also to a contextualisation

of how Chinese people actually are. Interestingly, when the local female facilitator asked participants questions in this regard, the answers were quite similar in their length and limited to the same responses as those obtained by this researcher. The contextualised answers were only given to the ‘outsider’ researcher.

Overall, most of the managers and subordinates were not aware of this idea; one of these managers, Elizabeth, even claimed that she “felt flattered by the idea”, in an implicit approval of it. The considerable number of participants having never heard of the view of women and bribery suggests two possibilities: first, that they have honestly never heard of it and therefore, this practice is a lot less common than was suggested by senior management; or second, that these respondents were not willing to talk about a difficult topic such as bribery and therefore decided to pretend they were unaware of the concept. This last point would fit the conceptualisation of “difficult interviews” explained by Cassell and Symon (2006), where participants are not willing to talk about certain things and therefore, they avoid them as in this case, by pretending that they do not know the story. The senior management interviews highlight that women are positioned differently from men as they cannot (or are at least less likely to) be bribed. In contrast, from a middle managerial and subordinate position, this Othering is not manifested, at least not openly. This could be seen from a postcolonial feminist perspective as an attempt of some female middle managers to fit into the organisation’s expectations of what is ‘normal’ to feel accommodated and part of the organisational family.

Based on the strong convictions displayed by Alice, that a female manager cannot be bribed (because of the aforementioned reasons), a number of follow up questions were asked.

These questions aimed to establish whether Alice believed people could be bribed in other ways and whether she felt that female managers were truly immune to bribery because of their gender.

Interviewer: “Are you sure that this is enough to avoid having some of your managers bribed on their trips and factory visits?”

Alice: “Yes, of course”.

The results of the follow up questions were consistent with Alice’s previous comments and back up her claims that employing female managers is the best way to avoid bribery. These answers open three possible scenarios: The first is that Alice honestly thinks that it is not possible to bribe female managers for the reasons already stated. This seems rather a naïve assumption; even if the scenario described is the culturally common way to bribe a person, it does not exclude the possibility that a female may be bribed in a less common way. In reality, Alice’s assumption that women cannot be bribed is based purely on culturally gendered stereotype. A stereotype cannot be applied as an absolute to an entire society.

The second is that Alice is trying to display some kind of higher moral ground as a female leader in the face of the moral weakness of some male managers. Morality is central to paternalistic leadership as displayed in the literature review, being described as “not abusing authority for personal gain and not mixing personal interest with business interest” (Farh and Cheng, 2000: 111). Consequently, Alice may have been trying to shape her answers to fit the social expectations of leaders.

The third possibility is that Alice may be displaying authoritarian leadership behaviour. As stated by Farh et al.(2008: 175) within the authoritarian behaviour; “Reputation-building, (is) to act in a dignified manner and to exhibit high self-confidence”. It is possible that Alice may

have been working on her personal image as HR leader and trying to send a strong signal that she knows what happens (reputation-building) and exhibits high self-confidence in front of her subordinates. Alice's answer exemplifies how she engages in Othering women from men, as if they were different to them and therefore incapable of being bribed. This attitude towards women reinforces a gender binary that although suggest women occupy a higher moral ground than men when it comes bribery, still reproduce false gender differences between them. Taking these scenarios into account, the following question was posed to determine whether women are advantaged when applying for jobs.

Interviewer: "If you have two candidates for a management position, who have the same qualifications and experience, one being a male and the other one being a female, do you think that the female has an advantage due to the fact that she cannot be bribed?"

Alice: "Well, it's difficult to say, I don't really know, maybe.... Maybe not... ha-ha... [Nervous laugh]".

Alice's answer to the question is inconclusive. It is important to highlight that this could be a case of open discrimination, which would be in breach of the Hong Kong Sex Discrimination Act (1995) Part II section 5 and 6 and Part V section 42, 2 (a) which expressly forbids this kind of discrimination. Even if Alice was assured of the confidentiality of the interview, she might not be willing to expose herself at this level. However, the number of females study participants suggested this might be the case.

When asked if she thought that the fact that females cannot be bribed affects their leadership style, Alice answered in an affirmative way: "Yes, there are advantages to being a

woman, but there are also disadvantages; there are also positive things about being a male manager as there are negative ones. Some other positive aspects of being a female manager are that they tend to be better organised than male managers, not in all the cases, but whenever I ask for some special information from a woman, they are better prepared to respond". On the contrary, when Eric was asked if this is enough to avoid having his employees being bribed, he stated; "I don't know if this is enough but it surely helps".

Based on the rationale presented by senior management, it is possible to establish that at times, being female can be advantageous within the organisation. Yet, because of legislation and possible discrimination issues, or simply self-denial, this is not admitted openly. The data show that the organisation values personal relationships and loyalty. Based on these factors and the cultural belief that women are less susceptible to bribery, women do have an advantage, an advantage based on stereotype. This advantage is most clearly demonstrated within the middle management tier, where there are more than two female middle managers for every male. The following section examines the more practical aspects of the organisation and their implication for women in leadership positions.

Constructed gender differences

Alice and Eric were interviewed separately to explore the issue of equality within the organisation and they stated that there are no differences in the way the organisation treats its employees. Eric also added: "I really don't want to make any differences; I always try to see everyone as equal". The answers given by senior managers are not unexpected and do not mention any kind of differential treatment based on gender. Doing so would be in breach of the Hong Kong Sex Discrimination Act (1995), discussed in the literature review. In truth, it is unlikely that a company would declare that it operates policies that contradict Hong Kong

legislation. However, even if senior management state they try to see “everyone as equal”, it is clear that each member of the organisation is different and therefore, has differing needs. Middle managers and subordinates did not make mention of any specific gender distinctions in the company. Maria (manager) stated:

“I don’t think that gender is an issue in this company; as you can see, there are many women in middle managerial positions and Alice also is a woman; she is the one who actually runs the show”.

Once the collected data were analysed, it became clear that the organisation has informal practices that are mostly customs, but that in practical terms result in the differential treatment of genders. The differences presented in the sections below are not stated in any of the official documents of the organisation; they emerged instead from the interviews. The first example of a constructed difference between the genders is exemplified by Samantha who stated:

“When the school terms start, we [female managers with children] might arrive late; we [female managers] require extra time to adapt every school year. But I don’t think this affects performance at work. It’s common for Alice [senior manager] to turn a blind eye when a female manager is late; there is no need to even mention this to her [Alice]. She and everyone else knows this in the office. However, men will never be late because of a new school term; the upbringing of children is the wife’s responsibility and they simply don’t engage in it”.

The comment made by Samantha is not unique, and similar remarks have been articulated by four other managers. Another instance for females arriving late or leaving early is when the domestic helper who works in one of the managers’ homes has resigned. Elizabeth (manager): “It’s not unusual for us [middle managers] to have to change the domestic helper [...], because of this, sometimes we arrived late to the office, but to be honest, Alice never said anything to

anyone”. Domestic helpers, as discussed in the literature review, are a vital part of the Hong Kong society. These employees unofficially run the house as de-facto housewives, under the supervision of the official housewife (Lo et al., 2003). These practices mean that the organisation turns a blind eye to managers starting late or leaving early in certain circumstances. Alice and Eric justified this on the basis that it helps to maintain a harmonious working environment.

Eric (senior manager) commented that these exceptions made to female managers “are not written in any company document, they are just customary, and the company is flexible and understanding, [...] In the end the important thing is for employees to do their job”. However, by having these “unwritten rules”, the company actually supports and reinforces the traditional role of women in Chinese society as this provides flexibility to the managers who have family related commitments, and are female. This is another example of how the organisation reinforces traditional gender binaries, and engages in the Othering of women from men, as the ones who need “special” kinds of flexibility. This situation places women in a group which has “special needs” that must be accommodated, as well as having, in consequence, its structural gendered inequalities left unchallenged (Lewis and Humbert, 2010). Interestingly, when Alice was asked what would happen if a male manager is late, citing the need to complete some kind of domestic duty that is socially expected to be completed by his wife as a reason, she replied:

“I don’t think it will happen; men just don’t take care of their kids as women do. it’s not their role”.

Interviewer: “Are there any circumstances where you think this could be the case?”

Alice: “Only if the wife dies, but in that case some other female relative will help him with his kids”.

The testimony illustrates the influence of the traditional role of women in Chinese society. Even if these managers do have successful professional careers, their role as housewives and mothers is still prominent. This role may even interfere with the professional career, but this simply does not happen to their male colleagues. Alice thinks that “Hong Kong has change a great deal in the last 30 years. Modern women are still expected to fulfil all the family roles, but also work outside the home and have a career”.

The situation that Alice describes, where women are constructed as having different needs from men, leads to the perpetuation of the traditional roles of women in Hong Kong society. The supposed support and flexibility that exist in the unwritten rules of the organisation actually increase the pressure that managers are under to play the traditional social role in a modern context.

Promotion and hiring of staff

Questions were asked to participants regarding several practical aspects of the day to day running of the organisation. In terms of opportunities for promotion within the company, Alice (senior manager) was asked about official company policy and also about how decisions regarding promotion are made. Alice stated: “There is no official written policy, but decisions are made by Eric and me”. Eric also confirmed this. In addition, no reference to promotion or hiring was found in the official documentation of the company.

According to Eric (senior manager) “The official non-written criteria for promotions is not based on gender, but seniority. The people who work the longest usually fit better into the organisation and most of the time, they are the best for promotion”. After carefully reviewing the interviews with the middle managers and subordinates, no gender distinctions could be found

regarding the hiring or promoting criteria. Selma (manager): “No, I don’t think that the company makes any difference between men and women when they hire people”. However, in their answers, the participants might be blind to the fact that promotion based on length of service is gender biased as women are more likely to have taken a career break and/or start work later in life after child rearing years (Jogulu and Wood, 2011).

When Alice was asked how she reached the second most influential post in the company, she stressed: “I have worked hard for the company and have been loyal”. Nevertheless, whilst Eric’s interview confirmed Alice’s perspective, her hard work and loyalty is just part of the picture. Alice neglected to state something that Eric highlighted: Eric and Alice are related. Eric’s wife is the sister of Alice’s husband. According to Eric, this special extended family bond “makes Alice trustworthy, something difficult to develop by other non-family employees”. Furthermore, Eric revealed that three of the fifteen managers interviewed for this project are also related to him. In addition, the company driver is also a cousin of Eric’s wife. According to Eric, his relatives are evenly distributed among genders: “Almost the same numbers of male and female relatives have been hired throughout the years”. Questions concerning the hiring of new staff followed a similar pattern. Alice stated:

“The main criteria for hiring new staff is language skills for the junior members and relevant working experience for the middle managers”, (in addition to) other things like projecting a good personal image and a positive impression from the candidates made in the interview”.

Yet, Eric later revealed that being part of his extended family contributes strongly to the recruitment process. Eric gave a series of reasons to support his view on hiring family members:

“Chinese society expects me to help my relatives by offering jobs when possible; I also want to help them; and most importantly, even though some of my relatives may not be the most qualified for the job, the family relationship tells me that they will be more loyal to me, and the company”.

As highlighted by Eric, when doing business in a Chinese cultural context, quite often reliability and trustworthiness are more important than specific work skills. This non-official company policy presents an image of a company that emphasises personal relationships over personal competence, downplaying personal merit in favour of blood ties (for more insights in the hiring process see section on loyalty in chapter 5). From an organisational perspective, this is another example of hybrid organisational practices, whereby the official policy for promotion is organisational tenure, acceptable to western eyes, but the importance of family ties is something more acceptable within a Chinese cultural context.

It is clear from Eric’s testimony that his extended family were heavily represented within the organisation. To investigate the possible differences in treatment of family and non-family members, all the managers and subordinates were asked about this topic. None of those interviewed talked of preferential treatment for family members. However, an informal conversation with a manager yielded a different answer. The manager conceded that nobody would admit such a thing in an interview, but it is a common feeling that sometimes family connections undermine the formal authority of the middle managers. The following comment was made once the interview was concluded and therefore, has not been recorded. Man (manager): “I can tell you the company doesn’t care about gender, but everyone knows that being a family member of Eric is an advantage; he likes to hire his relatives, because he thinks

they will be more loyal to him”. Unfortunately, no extra data could be collected on this issue from managers or subordinates.

Eric was asked if he thought that family members (a few of them work as subordinates of middle managers) could potentially undermine the authority of the middle managers. Eric admitted that “this is probably the case, and differences exist” (but) “nobody will talk about it”. Ultimately, even if the company has a promotion system based on seniority, and hiring on skills and work experience, it would appear that informal networks are also extremely relevant to the case. The fact that none of the respondents spoke openly about the preferential treatment of family members or the extra influence they may have could be a validation of what Roy et al. (2001) stated regarding Chinese participants, in that they often give the answer they think the interviewer wants to hear. An alternative explanation for this could be that this might be a taboo issue that nobody really wants to address (except for Eric as the owner of the organisation). Taking a holistic view, it could be argued that this is a sensitive issue that could potentially affect the harmony of the working environment.

Based on Eric’s testimony and only his testimony, because of the unwillingness of the members of the organisation to address this issue, plus the lack of written records on the issue, it could be speculated that there is no gender bias in hiring family members. Being a member of Eric’s extended family is an advantage regardless of gender: “Almost the same number of men and women relatives have been hired throughout the years”; reinforced by the fact that his family members are placed at all levels of the organisation from the male driver to the female second in charge of the organisation. Therefore, participants do not want to engage in conversation on the issue for fear of affecting the harmonious environment. A further explanation may be that

subordinates recognise the hiring and special status of Eric's family members as authoritarian behaviour. Consequently, they display the subordinated behaviour described by Farh and Cheng (2000) as part of paternalistic leadership conceptualisations, showing dependency and compliance by not mentioning or questioning or even referring to an issue that they perceive to be authoritarian.

On the topic of the formal/informal hiring policies, Eric favouring his relatives could be described as a case of particularism, where it is legitimate to use the personal connections for personal gain (Farh and Cheng, 2000). In this case, it is legitimate for Eric's family members to use their family connections to first obtain a job and later use their direct influence to gain access to Eric, consequently reinforcing another aspect of paternalistic leadership. Yet, the fact that middle managers were so reticent to address this openly could also lead one to think that there is some disapproval by them or a perception that this is not the correct way to proceed.

The current organisational arrangement regarding promotion and hiring of staff undoubtedly impacts middle managers. It is clear that those managers who are not related to Eric are at a disadvantage; furthermore, their authority and influence could be undermined by subordinates who have a "direct line" to senior management. However, the reluctance of participants to discuss their prospects of upward mobility within the organisational hierarchy has led to the establishment of distinct 'in-family' and 'non-family' groups. The next section will focus on training and development within the organisation.

Training and development

Participants were asked if the company has any kind of training and development programme for their employees and whether any specific groups of employees take advantage of

it. Based on the answers given, it became clear that the company does not have a training programme of any sort, and the only real skills that people must have at the time of starting work in the company are good language skills (English and Mandarin), due to the company's position as an intermediary between Mainland Chinese factories and buyers around the world. Training for each position takes place on the job, with people working in small teams responsible for a specific line of products, such as female shoes or toys.

Middle managers are responsible for training subordinates on the job. Training is their responsibility, but the whole team supports and learns from each other, as Winnie (manager) stated:

“There isn't any formal training here, we expect people to have some skills like good English but most of the training is one in the small teams” (...) if you want to find someone responsible for the training, I think each team leader (middle managers) is responsible, but in reality we all learn from each other in the teams”.

According to Alice (senior manager): “Teams usually have a balance of experience and junior staff that makes the work possible. (...) small groups are central for the development of the junior staff”.

It was emphasised by managers such as Maria and some subordinates in their answers that “it was important to have a harmonious working environment within the groups”. During the interviews, none of the participants articulated any specific difference between male and female managers (team leaders) in the development of managers or fostering of the junior staff.

Finally, when official company documents were analysed, there was no mention at all of training or development for staff. It is clear from the data that the organisation does not have a formal training programme. However, the absence of a formal programme does not mean that

there is no training. As stated by Redding et al. (2013), training and development is a powerful tool in Hong Kong for employee retention. The data also show that the members of the organisation engage in informal training, conducted within the working team, strengthening the relationships between team members. Consequence of this being the creation a family-like environment among team members, strengthening relationships in general and strengthening the positions of women as team leaders but as also trainers of subordinates. The following section will look at hierarchies in the organisation and their implications.

Hierarchies in the organisation

Both hierarchies and respect for them are central to paternalistic leadership in a Chinese context (as presented in the literature review). Consequently, the following section will focus on the hierarchies and their implications for the current case study. In Eric's (senior manager) view:

“The company has quite a flat hierarchy” (...) “The company is organised into small teams with clear leaders, (middle managers), formally called product developers; and their subordinates are either senior or junior merchandisers, depending on their work experience. The exceptions to this are the Human Resources management, accounting and finance, and logistics departments”.

No mention of this hierarchy has been found in any of the official documents of the organisation. When questioned about this, the response was evasive, as if it was not important to have hierarchies in writing. Eric:

“As mentioned, the company is rather flat but still everyone knows their place and respects it; there is no reason to write the official hierarchy in a formal document. Chinese people inherently respect hierarchies”.

Alice (senior manager) believes:

“The company doesn’t emphasise hierarchies, but that they are important, especially when dealing with Mainland Chinese factories. Mainland Chinese factory merchandisers sometimes refuse to deal with anyone but the team leader (product developer); often don’t understanding that most of the time any merchandiser could handle their issues” [...] “In the end, in the company everyone knows their place”.

When managers and subordinates were asked, they also agreed with the view that the company is rather flat in its organisation, but that hierarchies are still relevant. Selma (manager) gave an example of this:

“Even though Eric quite often leaves his office door open and more or less anyone could walk in and ask him a question, most people first ask his secretary if he is busy. Once Eric’s secretary gives them the go ahead, they pass through”.

After analysing the interviews with the top managers, middle managers and subordinates, it seems as if respect for hierarchies is the default position. Quite often the participants struggled to understand the question when asked, why this is the case? Maria (manager): “Why do we have respect for the hierarchy? I don’t know what you mean...why not?” Such an answer, in addition to the fact that the official documents do not state anything regarding hierarchies, limits a full analysis in the area of hierarchies. Consequently, based on the collected data, it becomes difficult to understand fully how the respect for hierarchies is achieved but it is clear from the data that respect for hierarchies is present. The analysed data show that there is respect for hierarchies in the organisation as described by Farh and Cheng (2000). The next section will examine whether there are differences in salaries between genders in the organisation

Gender differences in Salaries

From an institutional perspective, it is clear that both the gender pay gap and gender equality are an issue in Hong Kong. This was clearly stated in the interview with the spokeswomen from the EOC, Devi Novianti, who stressed: “Complaints regarding salaries were among the most commonly received by the organisation”. Furthermore, research by The Women’s Foundation has concluded that, regarding the gender pay gap and glass ceilings: “Gender stereotypes and unconscious biases about men, women and leadership aptitude continue to exclude women from decision-making positions across industry sectors and professions, from business to academia to law” (2014:16). As presented in the previous quotation, it is clear that cultural gender stereotypes still play a relevant role in Hong Kong society and are central factors that contribute to the gender pay gap. The relevance of this issue from an institutional perspective further strengthens the establishment of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (discussed in the literature review) and the publication of a series of booklets with relevant information on the matter by the Equal Opportunity Commission.

During the interview with the spokeswoman from the EOC, Devi Novianti, a specific booklet entitled “Equal Pay for Equal Work for Equal Value” was discussed. The booklet contains eleven pages, was first published by the EOC in December 2008 and remains in use to this day. In the booklet, the topics - equal work, equal pay, and equal value - are explained in a very plain and simple manner. The booklet can be understood by an audience with limited education and contains pictures on every page to illustrate its main points. The final section gives an explanation of how to launch a complaint if necessary. The entire document is in English, but was also printed in other languages such as Tagalog or Bahasa, with the aim of reaching ethnic

minority groups living in Hong Kong. These groups are mostly migrant workers, working as domestic helpers.

The production of the booklet is both an acknowledgement by the government that the gender pay gap is real, and an attempt to address it. Enloe (2014) has eloquently argued that government actions to develop gender equality and to close the gender pay gap are mostly motivated by economic necessity, as women are needed to start playing a more active role in the economy. Complementary to this argument, for the Hong Kong case, Lisa Moore, a spokeswoman from The Women's Foundation, explained:

“Hong Kong is faced with the double burden of a rapidly ageing population and a low birth rate, which would eventually result in a labour shortage [...]. It is important that the Government continues to promote and retain women in the workforce as well as leverage the untapped female talent to drive Hong Kong's economy”.

With these social and institutional precedents in mind, participants were asked if they were aware of any differences in pay between genders. Elizabeth (manager) commented:

“More or less we know how much each of us earn, I think that salaries are mostly based on the position of the person and their amount of time they have been working for the company, I don't think that the sex of a person makes any difference in salaries”.

Furthermore, when senior management were asked about this, Eric (senior manager) was very keen to stress:

“This would be against the law (to make gender differences in salaries), I wouldn't like to get into trouble for such a thing (...) and it would also have a negative impact all over the office”.

In this case study, based on the testimonies of the participants, no evidence was found of a pay gap between genders, in line with Tai (2013), who argues that in contemporary Hong Kong, the gender pay gap predominantly affects unskilled workers. Yet, this contradicts the report from The Women's Foundation which acknowledges that the gender pay gap is predominant among blue collar workers, but also states that "men earn around 20% more than women across all occupations for work of equal value" (2014: 15), a statement further supported by data from the Hong Kong statistics department (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014).

Finally, the fact that the EOC booklet has been published in several languages and targeted at female migrant workers would seem to indicate that female foreign migrant workers are the most disadvantaged. The singularities of the gender pay gap and differences between foreign and local ethnic Chinese women are beyond the scope of this research project (Census and Statistics Department Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2014). Yet further research could focus on this specific social issue. However, the aim to close of the gender pay gap has not led to more equal arrangements outside of salaries, as women may now receive the same pay as men, but their family responsibilities have not diminished (Lo, 2003). One consequence of this is the increasing the professional responsibilities expressed by female managers which are not matched by a corresponding decrease in domestic responsibilities. The sections above focused on general organisational arrangements and how these impact the participants of this study. The following sections focus on the attitudes that women have towards their work and family responsibilities and how the two different aspects of their life interplay.

Women as managers, attitudes towards work and family responsibilities

Several issues have been singled out to help to demonstrate the attitudes of several female managers. The first issue was highlighted by Alice (senior manager) and regards the unwillingness of female managers to take annual leave, with some even working bank holidays. Whilst sometimes the workload may demand some employees work on Saturdays, Alice stressed: “Some women come to work even though they have very little to do at the office. I don’t know why this is the case; males don’t do this”. Eric (senior management) added: “I don’t really mind how much leave people take; results are most important”.

Eric also commented: “I am not aware of the amount of leave employees take, but I am aware that some employees work during bank holidays”. Managers were asked directly why some of them come to the office when they do not have to, as with Sarah: “Sometimes we (managers) came to the office because there is a lot of work [...] but sometime it’s just to be able to relax; sometimes at home there are too many family responsibilities and this is an acceptable way to avoid them”

Based on these facts it is clear that the office also works as a place where women can escape from other responsibilities, in this case family responsibilities, using professional responsibilities to avoid domestic responsibilities. This behaviour gives a different gender perspective on the domestic/professional interplay; as in this case; one responsibility could be used to disengage from the other. The second issue concerns the differing work patterns of men and women. Alice introduced the idea that men are more willing (and able) than women to work long hours during the week (Purvanova and Muros, 2010). Overall, Alice highlighted that “in general, men work overtime. [...] women try to finish their tasks as soon as possible so they can go home and take care of their domestic responsibilities”.

This idea was supported by Eric's description:

“On one occasion, when the company had a large amount of work, in order to encourage employees [all women and men] to work overtime, and as a token of appreciation for their hard work, the dinner of employees working in the office after seven pm was paid for. The idea behind the decision was to try to be supportive of the staff especially during busy periods”[...] “Ordering food in the office for the employees who were working long hours was not a significant expense for the company and it encouraged employees to stay longer if needed, which in that time was normal”.

As time went by the volume of work decreased but the policy remained in place. However, Eric noticed that once the volume of work returned to normal: “[Only] men were happy to stay overtime”. He eventually realised that some male employees “were even pretending to have a lot of work so that they could stay in the office and have their dinner paid for, but women never did this; they always left as soon as they could”. This phenomenon, mentioned by Eric, was confirmed by Alice in an independent interview. Unfortunately, when managers and subordinates were asked questions relating to this issue, most of them stated that they were not working in the office at the time. Only three managers and none of the subordinates said they remembered the policy and were not able to comment on who did or did not work overtime or the reasons for this.

The data in this section present a puzzling picture. On the one hand, some women are willing to work on bank holidays or on days that they are not expected to work. Yet, on the other hand, men are willing to stay longer in the office on regular working days, but do not come to the office when they are not supposed to. Based on the data, it is reasonable to assume that, whereas men are most likely to work overtime or avoid going home, women may come into the office unnecessarily to avoid family pressures/responsibilities. This gives a fresh perspective on the work of Thein et al. (2010) and a new understanding of the personal and professional lives of

Hong Kong women. Professional Hong Kong women use their income to be able to provide for the family (in addition to the expected male contribution), but their positions also allow them to reduce some family responsibilities, something that men have traditionally done (Thein et al., 2010). In the current case study, women exchange physical places, time and attention, between their home and their office to cope with different requirements and expectations, blurring the line between the public and private spheres of life.

Once some clarification had been gained on male and female work patterns, female managers were asked again about how they organised their working day and how much overtime they are willing to do. The responses showed that they try to finish work as early as possible (never leaving essential work unfinished) to go home and carry out their family responsibilities. Winnie (manager): “During regular working days, I have to go home as early as possible; I have kids to take care of and a husband. Sometimes, I have to stay longer in the office because I have a lot of work, but I try to go home as soon as possible so I can take care of my family. Sometimes, I even delegate things that I am not happy delegating, but I can leave the office”. This testimony was validated by Winnie’s subordinate Rosa, who stated: “Winnie always tries to go home as soon as possible; it’s not easy for her, because she has to take care of her children also”.

However, some female managers were also happy to come to work on non-regular days to escape from family responsibilities, as Elisabeth (manager) explained: “Sometimes I ask my parents if they can stay with my kids on Saturday, I tell them that I have to come to the office, and I do come to the office, but I don’t always have a lot of work to do. But it gives me a break from my family and some time for myself”. The comment made by Elisabeth was not unique;

five other female managers articulated that sometimes the office is a socially accepted refuge from family responsibilities. When questioned why it was fine to work on a Saturday, but not to stay longer during weekdays, all managers concluded that family commitments during weekdays are primarily fixed and that they should be at home to have dinner with their children and put them to bed (the only exception was when they socialised with their co-workers and managers understand that to be part of their job). However, on Saturdays or public holidays, it is deemed more acceptable to go to the office to have a personal break.

Implications

The previous section presented the reactions of some managers to family responsibilities, during regular working days and holidays. Female managers are under pressure to finish work on time to take care of family commitments during the week. Testimonies in this section present a struggle to fulfil both professional and family expectations. Findings support the concept of a “superwomen” (Northouse, 2012), discussed in the literature review, a woman struggling to fulfil different expectations: the traditional role of mother/wife and the professional role of manager. Consequently, creating a feminist unified identity that bring together their professional and family roles, in a hybrid way.

Interestingly, none of the participants manifested open discontent. Comments were made regarding difficulties, but in general female managers spoke about balancing the family/professional expectations as part of a reality of being a working female. However, it would seem that, as Venter (2002) stated, these women do not challenge the social status quo; rather, they accept it. Managers also work when they are not supposed to so that they escape family commitments, using the pretence of professional commitments to avoid domesticity.

In summary, it could be suggested that managers use both family and professional responsibilities to achieve balance in their life; family commitments are utilised to leave the office as soon as possible during weekdays, but work responsibilities allow the avoidance of family commitments during public holidays. It could also be argued that women make excuses to go to the office during public holidays, even if they do not have work to do, to find some private space and respite from family duties. Interestingly, engaging in behaviours presented by men who use work to escape domestic life and chores, as presented by the paid company dinner example. In the collected data, it is difficult to find any reference to a manager having any kind of 'alone' time. It is therefore a strong possibility that attending an empty office on a bank holiday is just a search for personal space, away from family or professional commitments. This analysis leads to the final section of this chapter on how where women address their domestic and professional challenges.

Challenges that female managers face, at home and professionally

This section focuses on the challenges that managers face on a daily basis. Middle managers were asked specifically about the challenges that they face, in both their professional and private lives. The answers to the questions are grouped into two broad categories based on the findings of Choi and Chao (2006), discussed in the literature review; these are sources of stress at work (perceived work demands) and sources of stress at home (perceived family demands). It is important to point out that that most of the data presented in this section emerged during the last round of interviews. As stated in the methodology chapter, during this round, a local ethnic Chinese female facilitator from Hong Kong interviewed the middle managers and their subordinates. In the previous two rounds of interviews, similar questions were asked but no meaningful data were obtained.

There are three main factors to consider when analysing the improved outcome of these interviews. First, the interviewer was a woman interviewing other women, which helped create better rapport with the female interviewees, as Oakely (1981) has argued (see methodology chapter). Second, the interviewer was a local, ethnically Chinese female, able to create a better interviewing climate and communication which helped with the data collection. Finally, the facilitator possessed a great deal of experience of conducting interviews in this particular cultural setting, which undoubtedly led to richer data, yet she was not directly involved in the data analysis. It is highly likely that all three factors played a part in the success of these interviews.

Work Challenges

In terms of perceived work demands and how these generate stress and affect management function, the answers were almost unanimous from both middle managers and their subordinates. They acknowledged that work is demanding and a source of stress, especially during the high season (a few months before Christmas), but the cooperative working environment, mutual support and paternalistic leadership style turned it into a positive working experience. People in the organisation know that these are the crucial times of the year; everyone is trying to work as hard as possible and in general, there is a culture of mutual support across the organisation. Participants made it clear that being able to trust each other is a key element in reducing stress, or at least preventing it from increasing. Overall, responsibilities assigned to the managers were perceived to be fair and work demands reasonable. Mandy (manager): “There is a lot of work during the high season; this is because most of the clients are getting ready for Christmas, and so there is a lot of work. But we are used to that; it’s part of the job. The good side of it is that we all work together as a big family helping each other”.

Managers and subordinates also identified a number of other sources of stress at work, most of them external to the organisation. The two most prominent sources are described by Phoebe (manager) as follows: “Quite often, we have problems with suppliers they are not always reliable; sometimes they deliver late, and sometimes there are just too many damaged goods”; and Man (manager): “Clients can be really difficult sometimes; they keep pushing for lower and lower prices but what they don’t realise is that they compromised on quality”. The testimonies of the participants present a picture in which middle managers are under a level of work-related stress that is perceived to be reasonable.

Family stress

Questions concerning the perceived demands of family and the associated stress were grouped into two categories. The first group comprised six single women who still live with their parents, and a second group of managers who are married and live with their husbands and children. Some of the demands and coping mechanisms identified in this study are quite similar to the demands and coping mechanics previously identified by Wajcman (2013) in a western cultural setting. This is remarkable as women in western cultural settings have different social and cultural experiences, such as the rise of western feminism or earlier implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation. Yet, somehow responsibilities and coping mechanisms are quite similar, regardless of the differences in social contexts. This finding highlights, that there are similarities regarding how women perform their professional and private roles that are common to both groups, independently of the differences in cultural influences. In addition this finding also questions the binary understanding within some feminist movements, where non-western women are viewed Other to the western feminist, and shows that even if women in different settings experience what is to be a woman differently, there are also similarities among groups of

women culturally dissimilar This finding supports Mohanty (1984), who argues there is a need to move away from the idea of first world woman as subject versus the third world woman as object, often articulated by western feminists.

First group of managers (unmarried)

For the first group, the unmarried women, Eric (senior manager) presented a speculative explanation for working women who still live with their parents in Hong Kong: “It’s common in Hong Kong for people, especially women, to live with their parents until marriage because of cultural/traditional social arrangements; it was also common until recently for the youngest daughter in the family not to get married to take care of her parents when they become old”.

Interestingly, some of the testimonies of the managers tend to agree with this view, but also some other testimonies show that this is not always the case. For instance, Samantha (manager) states: “I am the youngest daughter in my family; it’s expected that I will live with my parents until I get married myself”. Mandy (manager) supports the arguments presented by Eric, but also offers an alternative financial explanation for unmarried women living with parents: “Property in Hong Kong is so expensive; a single person with a normal salary cannot buy anything; because of this, we tend to live with relatives”. Based on the answers given by the managers, it is possible to group the responses into two distinct groups: those based on respect for traditional values, the other on financial necessity.

When Eric was asked about salaries and the scope for managers to move out of their parent’s home, he claimed: “Even if property prices in Hong Kong are extremely high, middle managers could afford to rent a flat in a reasonable location and live alone if they wanted; buying is more difficult, but renting is not a problem”. Consequently, it could be inferred that these

managers still live with their parents partly for financial reasons but also to uphold traditional values. The female managers answered, mixing traditional values and modern financial issues in a hybrid fashion, showing how they negotiate the traditional expectation within modern constraints. This group of women used their parents as their family group for reference when answering the questions.

All the managers from both groups clearly identified their family responsibilities as a greater source of stress than their job, as Choi and Chao (2006) also found in their study. However, both groups (the married and unmarried women), recognised their families for quite different reasons. For the first group, the unmarried women, the main source of stress was the pressure that they received from parents and extended relatives, especially during the festive seasons such as Chinese New Year. This pressure was linked to marital status. As Elisabeth (manager) mentioned in her interview: “Being single and over 30 years old is viewed as a social failure in Hong Kong”.

Family members are constantly reminding the single middle managers of their (social) need to get married. Based on these answers, the marital status of these women is a clear source of stress. The aim of the next questions was to evaluate how these family pressures affect their behaviour as leaders.

Interviewer: “Do you think that your marital status and the stress that it generates has an impact on your role as a manager?”

Sarah: “Yes, it does. If I have an argument with my family due to this problem, I will be upset, and I will remain upset the entire day, sometimes even for days, and this definitely affects my performance, but the big problem is with some of my subordinates. I know that some of them in the office think that I am a failure because I am not married; they make jokes behind my back and I think they don’t respect me as much as they do with married women”.

Interviewer: “Is your marital status so relevant?”

Sarah (manager): “Yes, it is”.

Interviewer: “Why?”

Sarah (manager): “I don’t know”; in this case, the previous quotation from Elisabeth (manager), “Being single and over 30 years old is viewed as a social failure in Hong Kong”, could lead to the belief that the problem is social expectation towards women. This last dialogue with Sarah identified two common themes in relation to marital status and leadership performance. First, family issues regarding marital status cause distress for female managers and this stress can translate into poor working performance. Second, female managers know that employees make jokes and comments behind their backs; there was a recurrent expression of feeling that somehow their leadership and authority was undermined by this fact. As expected, when Sarah’s subordinates were asked, they denied ever making fun of her.

This second part of this answer exposes a problem with the framework of the theory of paternalistic leadership. This theory has been based and developed in a male oriented, traditionally Chinese society, where it was assumed that males were superior to females. Yet, with females gaining positions of power, a conflict emerges between the traditional view of women as inferior to men and the hard fact that many men are now managed by women. In a way, women in leadership have to negotiate their position within two dominant conceptualisation: a conceptualisation on the traditional female role, and how to behave and a conceptualisation on women in leadership. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, even if women are in formally similar positions in the organisational hierarchy, they are still Othered by other members of the organisation due to their gender. This conflict can result in male subordinates attacking the private lives of female managers behind their back. Two key traditional roles of the Chinese

women are changing. First, where once women followed, many are now leading. Second, more and more women are waiting till later in life to fulfil the traditional roles of mothers, wives and/or homemakers. Consequently, the female managers of the current study have developed identities where both family and professional expectations are integrated in a hybrid form. Here, women aspire to fulfil all expectations in a unified manner, while making distinctions between the professional and the family world. However, based on the gossip and criticism identified in this section, it seems some of the male subordinates do not identify their female managers in the same hybrid form, and use the traditional expectations to undermine them.

Cross examination of these statements with the answers given by subordinates can confirm the argument that there is social stigma surrounding the idea of being over 30, female, Chinese and single. Interestingly, this issue was not presented in the interviews as a problem that women face, but rather as a description of society and its expectations. While subordinates never stated this openly in their answers, both males and females touched on the issue: Madison (subordinate): “People think that women over the age of 30 should be married in Hong Kong” or Marta (subordinate): “Most women over 30 are married in Hong Kong; this is normal”.

All participants discredited the idea that a female manager’s authority may be undermined if she was still single and in her thirties, at least at a personal level. However, one female subordinate confirmed the idea to be true, especially for those managers responsible for male subordinates. This participant also confirmed the managers’ statements about gossiping (which mostly happens in the pantry room), while also acknowledging that nobody will openly admit this in an interview. Admission of gossiping or the idea that being single may undermine the authority of a female manager would look bad and potentially be detrimental to their career.

During cross referencing, Alice stated that she was fully aware of the gossiping that goes on in the office: “I have even casually heard jokes and remarks” made about some of the middle managers who are not married and were experiencing trouble in their family lives “[...] I think that this situation has a clear impact on the performance of the team leaders [female middle managers]. But I think there is nothing I can do; this is a social issue that not only affects the company but the entire society [...] this is the way things are”. When asked if both male and female subordinates made jokes about the marital status of their supervisors, Alice mentioned that “mostly females do it”.

Consequently Alice was asked why she thinks that the authority of female managers is undermined by their marital status: “I don’t know. I feel that some of the men employees resent the fact that they are led by females, and because these women are doing a good job; all that can be criticised is their private lives [...] but I am not sure if the employees resent the managers or if they feel they lose face by being led by a woman”. Finally, Alice stated that “men focus their attacks on social issues that are not important for work.... Like marital status, I don’t think that the marital status of anyone is really an issue”.

Traditionally in China, as discussed in the literature review, men have always held the power, relegating the woman to her traditional homemaker role (Tang et al., 2010). Women are now gaining positions of power across all elements of Chinese society and this can create tension that arises from a need to value and hold on to the traditional, whilst embracing the new.

After analysing the collected data, this case study agrees with the ideas presented by Francesco and Shaffer (2009), in which some men in society may be discriminating against women because they have become subordinate to them, in contrast to traditional societal roles.

Furthermore, it could be argued that their masculinity is threatened by women in positions of power, as presented by Leung and Chan (2012). Some men appear to employ a strategy of Othering to reconcile this new phenomenon of women in leadership, depicting them as unsuccessful women from a traditional perspective and ignoring their professional achievements. In general, women do not seem to react to the discrimination they experience, opting instead to accept the situation. As Venter (2002) stated, women in Hong Kong have come to expect sexist behaviour as part of daily social interaction.

Alice acknowledged that she could see some differences in the sources of stress and challenges that her female middle managers face: “In Hong Kong everyone is always under stress; that is the way things are. But it’s true that female managers who have families find their families a source of stress, and because they can’t fulfil both roles perfectly at all times, this puts pressure on some of the female managers. However, some of the female managers who are around 30 and still single are stressed because of their marital status, and no matter how much Hong Kong has changed, this is still a central issue”.

Tina (middle manager) explained that in Hong Kong culture: “Pressure is received by single women from their families, especially her parents, who want her to get married and have children so they can be grandparents. Also, from their social circle, because some of their friends are getting married, or already married and having children”. In addition to these cultural pressures, Alice (senior manager) articulated: “I think this marital situation makes men subordinates; some, not all, view their women team’s leaders [female managers] as social failures, which quite often affects the formal power of their position”.

Eric (senior manager) also expressed similar views: “I see how female managers are under pressure from family commitments, both those who are married and those who are still single. I am aware that some male subordinates make fun of unmarried female managers, but I don’t believe it to be a serious issue[...] people always need something to talk about and especially something to gossip about; so if it wasn’t this, it would be something else; this gossip is at the most a reflection of how times are changing”.

Even though Eric underplayed the relevance of male subordinates making fun of unmarried female managers, the issue is of clear relevance. There is a reason why subordinates choose to focus their criticism on this particular issue. By citing ‘tradition’, subordinates have a convenient argument at hand. This further reinforces the notion that women must perform professionally but also marry and have a family.

Second group of managers (married)

The second group of nine married middle managers identified a different kind of family pressure: to fulfil their role as wife, mother and care giver for parents and in-laws. Having significant responsibilities outside the home makes this family role more difficult to fulfil. Helen (manager) commented: “[I feel] a lack of support from my husband for the upbringing of our children and domestic chores in general”. She described her husband as “extremely focused on his career” [...] “But I also think that is an excuse” (meaning the focus on his career) “with little time and unwillingness to help with the domestic chores, my son or old relatives; this is my job, not his”. This notion was echoed by several of the other participants.

Managers do get help from domestic workers, and they are consistently referred to as a real source of support within the home. However, these support workers can also be a source of stress, as highlighted by Mandy (manager):

“Managing domestic helpers, foreigners who often don’t speak Chinese or English well, sometimes lacking basic knowledge of Chinese culture, is also a job in itself [...] Once I got a domestic helper from Indonesia. I don’t know where she actually was from in Indonesia, but she did not even know how to use the vacuum cleaner. I even had to teach her how to use the washing machine, she spoke no English or Chinese, which made everything much worse. I don’t think she was any real help to be honest”.

This is yet another responsibility for female middle managers, the training of the domestic helpers. This could be anything from instructions on how to cook basic Chinese food to how to iron a shirt properly or how to use a vacuum cleaner. The managers’ views on domestic help echoed those of Groves and Lui (2012) in the literature review that domestic helpers are presented as a less than optimal solution to the domestic chores and in some cases, they add to the already high workload at home. Yet, unanimously, managers, subordinates and senior management in the company stated that domestic helpers were also vital to the Hong Kong economy and that without them, most women would not be able to work outside their home.

Female managers such as Vivien stressed that they- “...try to go home as early as possible to do the housework”, but it is clear that these managers also have domestic helpers to help them with those duties. Therefore, managers were questioned why they were so eager to go home if their domestic helper was taking care of the domestic chores. Another manager, Cindy articulated: “Having domestic help at home is of great help and they would not be able to have a job outside their home without the help. But, part of my job is also to supervise the [domestic] helper, and even if a [domestic] helper can cook, that is not a replacement for a mother”. It was

clear by the answers to the question that the domestic duties of the managers involved not only physical work in the home (such as cooking), but also providing emotional support and undertaking activities with their children, as well as supervising the domestic help.

Based on this finding it is clear that female managers face a similar situation to the one described by Wacjman (2013) in western cultural settings, where women bear the burden of domestic chores regardless of their formal employment situation. Given that this is the case, managers were asked if their husbands could take care of some of the responsibilities, such as providing emotional support to the children or the supervision of the domestic helpers. These questions proved extremely difficult for participants to answer. Answers, where given, were limited. Samantha said that “it was a possibility”. Most of the participants believed, as Phoebe (manager) does, that “it is not possible for men to take care of these chores”. When asked why, it was even more arduous for the participants to articulate a clear answer. The most common answer as articulated by Samantha was that “men would not do that”.

The inability of the participants to address the possibility that men could be more proactive in dealing with domestic issues shows how deeply established the traditional gender roles are in society, and also a general acceptance of a gendered status quo that positions women as the primary labourers within the domestic realm. A possible explanation for this could be that female managers are resigned to a situation that is unequal because they feel they cannot do anything to challenge tradition and, therefore, they accept the current social arrangements. Alternatively, the lack of willingness on the part of women to try and challenge the status quo could also support the idea that managers do not feel oppressed within the current arrangements (Lee, 2003). Yet, within the current case study and based on the collected data, it would be

excessive to claim, as Lee (2003) does in her study, that managers are free from oppression. In any case, further research could focus on exploring these ideas in more detail.

Earlier in this chapter it was argued that women create a hybrid identity by combining their professional and family roles. Yet, within this section it is clear that some men do not perceive their wives (the managers of this study) in the same way. Based on the testimonies, family issues and domestic chores are allocated to women, making reference to their traditional role in society and omitting any reference to their professional responsibilities. Men can still position women as subordinates to themselves, as women who are supposed to behave according to the traditional role set by Chinese society. Arguably, some men are gender-blind to the specific issues of what is it to be woman and to have a professional career in Hong Kong. At this point it would be interesting, but is unfortunately beyond the scope of this research, to establish the expectations of men towards their working wives.

On a final note, as presented in the literature review and evidenced by the participants in this study, domestic helpers play a central role in Hong Kong society and have a vital role in the economy. Domestic helpers free women from domestic chores, consequently allowing them to hold formal jobs (Tai, 2013; Groves and Lui, 2012). This coping strategy based on the hiring of domestic help developed by female managers in Hong Kong, helps them to balance their domestic and professional responsibilities. This behaviour has also been identified by Wajcman (2013), but in a western cultural setting, thereby suggesting that women may experience family stress in other cultural contexts, which warrants further research.

Implications

The main source of stress identified was the demand for female managers to fulfil a dual role that of housewife/mother/carer and the other, a professional manager, and the consequent limitations this placed on their time. In the interviews, managers made it clear that they struggled to do justice to both roles. They find themselves short of time to complete daily work tasks and consequently, at times they are unable to manage effectively. Managers may need to take days off work to care for sick family members, and arrive late or leave early because of family commitments.

These women commented that their husbands would never leave the office earlier to collect the children from school if the domestic helper was not available; that was entirely their responsibility. Managers feel that they are sometimes unable complete all of their office based responsibilities, leaving them no option but to delegate. Additionally, managers frequently have to decline social invitations from co-workers such as dinners and karaoke. These occasions that can be real bonding exercises for the team and managers sometimes miss out on the opportunity to forge stronger working relationships this way. In a way, the identity of the female managers is a hybrid construct, mixing the traditional family role and the professional. Yet, their husbands' expectations show that they are viewed as Others, in agreement with the traditional binary gender categories. Furthermore, the interviews highlight a gender blindness among men, who do not see the singularities of being a woman in Hong Kong.

Subordinates revealed that they are aware of the pressures managers face in trying to fulfil a dual role. It was pointed out that it could be difficult at times to work with managers who also have several other non-work related responsibilities. However, the general consensus was that today, women must engage in paid work because children are expensive and both partners

have to work to meet financial responsibilities. Having analysed both work and family-related sources of stress, it is possible to conclude that the majority of stress endured by female managers is generated at home, although work is also a contributing factor. This stress could be linked to the anxiety generated between the hybrid family/professional self-image of the female managers and the expectations of their husbands.

Neither managers nor subordinates appeared to question the societal pressure to fulfil this dual role of homemaker and financial provider; or entertained the possibility that they may choose not to have children or encourage their husbands to take on more domestic responsibilities which would, in turn, allow them to develop their careers. The general attitude was one of acceptance of the status quo.

Conclusion

This chapter specifically analysed the organisational aspects that influence the behaviours of ethnically Chinese, female managers. The chapter started by analysing official documentation from the organisation. In this analysis, it emerged that employees are very familiar with some documents but almost completely unaware of the Employee Handbook. This is followed by the section entitled Bribery; the female advantage, where it is clear that non-official differences are made between genders. The subsequent sections examined the promotion and hiring of staff, training and development, hierarchies within the organisation and potential differences in salaries. In examining these issues, no clear differences in the treatment of men and women were found. However, a differentiation was made between employees that are related to Eric (the owner of the company) and non-related employees. The last two sections, Women as managers, attitudes towards work and family responsibilities and Challenges that female managers face, at home and

professionally, examined how women juggle their family and professional relationships and how they are affected by this. From this section, it is clear how female managers can create a hybrid identity that brings together both their professional and family self. Yet, it remains inconclusive whether men, either in the office or as family members, are able to recognise and accept women and their complex hybrids identity. Based on the collected evidence, it seems that men continue to identify women in a more traditional Chinese manner.

Chapter 7

Paternalistic leadership

Introduction

The following chapter explores how the views and behaviours of ethnically Chinese, female managers might be understood, utilising paternalistic leadership, the dominant, hegemonic, indigenous theory, and postcolonial feminism as a critical theoretical lens. As presented in the literature review, the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership is divided into three main independent domains (Wu and Xu, 2012): authoritarian, moral, and benevolent. Each domain is analysed independently in this chapter before a summary and final conclusion. The data analysed in this chapter are primarily formed of interviews with fifteen Hong Kong ethnically Chinese, female managers, alongside interviews with a male and female subordinate for each manager. The managers and subordinates were asked the same questions, which were later cross-examined. Yet, subordinates were asked additional questions to establish whether they display the expected subordinate behaviour described by the model of paternalistic leadership.

According to the model presented by Farh and Cheng (2000), leaders who behave in a paternalistic way will motivate certain behaviours among subordinates. Each domain of paternalistic leadership corresponds to an expected subordinate behaviour: for the moral domain, subordinate responses are expected to display; identification and modelling; within the authoritarian domain, compliance, obedience, respect and fear, and a sense of shame; finally, for the benevolent domain, it is expected that subordinates show gratitude and strive to reciprocate (Wu and Xu, 2012). From a postcolonial feminist perspective, these behaviours are understood to be what is constituted as being “normal” and what, culturally, Chinese managers should aspire to

(Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). However, in this specific case there are two dominant competing conceptualisation, as the female managers are also influenced by the traditional role of women in Chinese societies. Both conceptualisation often times find themselves colliding and in collusion, but also contradict each other. The following chapter focuses on how women actually negotiate their identity within these two competing dominant conceptualisation. In contrast to the two previous chapters, the focus of this section is not on how paternalistic leadership is applied from the top or the organisational hierarchy, but on how the female middle managers utilise or refrain from utilising paternalistic leadership on their subordinates, and the subordinates' responses.

Authoritarian domain

The authoritarian domain is the focus of two sets of questions. The first consists of a set of four questions put to all fifteen managers and all 30 subordinates, cross-referencing the answers from both groups. The second set of questions was only put to the subordinates. The overall aim of both sets of questions was to establish the presence of the authoritarian domain. This section analyses the answers to the first set of questions before moving on to the second set and providing a summary.

The first four questions of this section are designed to analyse the construct authoritarianism of the managers as a part of paternalistic leadership. Examples of interview questions include: Do you have to have the last word in a meeting with your subordinates? Do you take all the decisions in your department, even the small ones? Do you exercise strict discipline over your subordinates? Do you tell off your subordinates when the work does not get done?

The first two questions above are aimed at investigating the delegation and control of the managers: how much is delegated and how much control is exercised over the subordinates. According to the framework of paternalistic leadership, leaders exercise tight control; they should make, and not delegate, all the decisions (Wu and Xu, 2012). The third question aims to examine the rigidity of the working environment and the level of discipline; paternalistic leadership expects strict discipline from the subordinates (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Finally, the last question focuses on tolerance by questioning the outcomes of not performing as expected at work. Paternalistic leaders expect subordinates to perform and they have a low tolerance for underperformance (Farh and Cheng, 2000).

However, the current hegemonic conceptualisation, paternalistic leadership, in general, and the authoritarian domain, in particular, do not take into account women in managerial positions. As presented in the literature review, there are issues affecting women from the perspective of their traditional gender roles that openly clash with the male focused conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. For instance, women are expected to have gentle manners (Tang et al., 2010), which asserts their femininity and Others themselves from men. Women in managerial positions are concerned that they may be perceived as less feminine than other women (Xian and Woodhams, 2008); in addition, the family demands on female managers persist regardless of their professional role (Choi and Chen, 2006).

These female singularities are a priori, in direct contrast with the established conceptualisations of the authoritarian domain of paternalistic leadership. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, there could be three possible but not mutually exclusive behaviours. First is mimicry, aimed at copying the behaviour of the dominant conceptualisation, hoping to achieve

“normality” (Frenkel, 2008). Second is dissent, the display of a diverging behaviour from that expected in the dominant conceptualisation, somehow challenging the hegemony of paternalistic leadership and potentially engaging in self Othering. Finally, there is hybridity, incorporating elements of the dominant conceptualisation, to create a hybrid identity (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). These strategies will be analysed in the following section.

For the first question, “Do you have to have the last word in a meeting with your subordinates?”, the (female) managers did not think that they had to have the last word at every meeting, stressing this is only necessary for important decisions. Interestingly, the last word was related to being seen to be in charge, but only if the decision was extremely important, as can be seen from Tina’s interview.

Interviewer: “Do you have to have the last word in a meeting with your subordinates?”

Tina: “It depends...”.

Interviewer: “Depends on what?”

Tina: “It depends on how important the decision is; if the issue is about how much we can compromise on quality without affecting the relationship with the clients, it is certainly a decision that I have to make. But if we are talking about where to go for lunch with a new client as part of a business lunch, I do not mind if Ruth [one of her team members, yet she was not available to be interviewed] picks the restaurant; actually she knows much better places than I do”.

Interviewer: “Why do you have to take the important decisions?”

Tina: “Well... [Awkward silence] I am the boss, I have to take the important decisions; if I do not, my subordinates will think badly of me”. In this case, Sofia, Tina’s subordinate, stated that: “I expect my manager [Tina] to take decisions; it is her job; there are many things that I just don’t know”.

This point is further evidenced and shown to be important in many of the interviews.

Vivien (manager) highlighted how subordinate expectations may shape managerial roles:

“I think that my subordinates expect me to have the last word for the important decisions”. Furthermore, the managers appeared constrained by their worries of what their subordinates might think: “It is my job as manager to take these decisions; if I don’t take important decisions, I would be a bad leader; I will look bad in front of others”.

When subordinates were asked the same questions, they also agreed, regardless of gender, with the view of their managers. Managers only have the last word in meetings in very serious cases, and subordinates generally accept this. Lila stated: “This is fine, because managers almost always, ha ha, know better than subordinates” and consequently, supported what was stated by the managers. Furthermore, interviews with subordinates elucidated that no subordinate would undermine their manager’s decisions, especially in meetings in front of other colleagues. Lisa (subordinate): “But when a manager takes a decision, that is it, no subordinate will contradict them, especially in front of others, [...] because this could make managers lose face”.

Overall, managers do not always have to have the last word, but subordinates do not try to have the last word for themselves; in this case there was no difference among male and female subordinates’ answers. The last word appears to be an expected behaviour of the managers, but a lack of decision-making initiative from the subordinates is also highlighted. Finally, four subordinates highlighted that they believed if subordinates are in disagreement, the manager should step in and have the last word to make a decision. Jerry places managers as a type of higher authority, expected to resolve disagreements, Jerry (subordinate): “[...] When colleagues in the same team cannot agree on something, I expect the manager to step in and solve the issue”.

For the second question, “Do you take all the decisions in your department, even the small ones?”, the managers did not provide a cohesive answer, but two emerging themes appear: managers who delegate when the issue is trivial, and those who delegate because they do not

have time to make all the decisions. Samantha, as a manager, highlights that she thinks delegating small tasks to subordinates might lead to positive empowerment:

Samantha: “Quite often I delegate small decisions just because it is easier for me to delegate them and to concentrate on the important stuff, but it also makes my team members feel good when they have the chance to take some decisions”.

Stella and Robert, Samantha’s subordinates, agreed with the fact that delegation is extremely limited and rather symbolic, but did not state that it makes them feel good, as presented by Samantha. Robert (subordinate): “Not much is delegated and when something is, most of the time is not very important”. Interviewer: “Does the delegation make you feel important?” Robert (subordinate): “Not really, it’s nothing special”.

When subordinates were questioned on the same topic, they all agreed that there is some delegation, but the reasons often varied. A small group thought their managers only delegate decisions when they cannot do it themselves. Kevin (subordinate): “My manager was taking care of a relative in hospital; so day to day decisions for a few days were taken by the second most senior person in the team”. This group of participants viewed their managers as people who inflict very tight control and mostly reluctant to delegate decisions.

The other group of subordinates believed that delegation happens more often and not, only as a last resort. Independently of gender, this group of subordinates described the delegation of decisions as a way of assigning roles, to train and develop and most importantly, as a way to test subordinate judgment and decision-making. Yet, in all cases, the managers remained in control and any decision wrongly made by subordinates could be reversed by the managers. Olivia highlights that the type of decisions delegated are quite meaningless, Olivia (subordinate):

“My manager often delegates but her delegation is quite often a test; I have seen this; first she start with small tasks as a test and if people respond, more important things are delegated, but nothing really important is really delegated”. Olivia’s manager Phoebe stated: “Delegation is a way to develop subordinates, it helps them to take more responsibilities but at the end of the day I am the team leader; so I am responsible and I have to do the important things”, consequently validating Olivia’s statement.

For the third question, “Do you exercise strict discipline over your subordinates?”, interestingly, no manager admitted to exercising any kind of strict discipline when dealing with subordinates. When asked why, some stated that it was not needed; others claimed that they did not want to be strict; three of the managers mentioned that they were strict with their children but not with their subordinates. When asked why this difference was made, Phoebe referred to the age and maturity of people: “My kids are kids and do not know much so I have to teach them, but my subordinates are grown-ups, so it is not a problem”.

Phoebe shows how managers interplay the different roles of managers and mothers, and how subordinates are not seen or treated in the same way as their children, lacking representation in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. Phoebe’s testimony also presents her understanding of a clear distinction between both her roles, as a mother and a manager. In this specific case, Phoebe constructs her role as manager as Other to her role as mother, when she talks about discipline in her professional life. Yet, she also suggests that she might be more disciplinarian and potentially be more authoritarian in her role as a mother.

Subordinates also agreed with the managers’ view that people behaved as expected and managers were reasonable. When problems occurred, managers dealt with them but in essence,

most subordinates, such as Marta, classified the working environment as “harmonious” and desired for it to be so. Marta (subordinate): “I do not think it is a matter of discipline. I think that most people want to have harmony in the office”.

Based on the uniformity of the answers, it could be argued that there is possibly a lack of strict discipline within this relationship. However, personal observations have been demonstrated to contradict this argument, and some discipline (neither strict nor relaxed) was observed. Yet, managers may not want to appear hard in front of an outsider (the interviewer) for fear of being perceived less feminine, as stressed by Xian and Woodhams (2008), which may also explain the uniformity of their answers, or even being perceived as being hard by their own subordinates for the same reason. Remarkably, some managers do not have a problem being strict with their own children, and construct their mother role as Other to their role of managers, in a way exposing the possibility that being a strict mother does not affect their femininity. Interestingly, senior management also commented on this issue. Eric: “You might not see because you are not Chinese, but there is a lot of order and discipline in the office; the problem is that you do not see it because it is below the overall harmony”. Eric was, in this case, explaining to an outsider, the interviewer, some Chinese local dynamics. Moreover, adding that within the company that “everyone knows their place and respects it”. Based on this testimony, in principle, the organisation appears to lack strict discipline, potentially due to the need to keep harmony. However, there is some implicit discipline found in harmony, where everyone knows how to behave.

For the fourth question, “Do you tell off your employees when the work does not get done?”, most of the managers affirmed that they do. Cindy (manager) highlighted how managers

may have to motivate their subordinates: “Sometimes subordinates are a bit lazy and I have to push them a bit; not too hard, otherwise they will get upset but some kind of wake-up call ... I think I am strict but fair, but more important than telling employees off is to understand why things do not get done”.

The managers who did not reply in an affirmative way to the question did not give a definitive answer. Yet, these managers did not deny telling off their workers, but produced uncompromised answers, difficult to categorize. One instance of this can be seen in the case of Helen (manager), who stated: “I do not know. I think I do but I am not sure”. Nevertheless, all managers stressed the importance of completing their own work to set a good example and be a role model. Subordinates confirmed that employees are told off, but that this was not perceived in a negative way by either the managers or subordinates; it was mostly accepted as part of the relationship.

From a managerial perspective, Elizabeth (manager) showed awareness of the importance of distinctions between the public and private spheres: “I do not think that telling off members of my team is a problem. I think we all know it is part of the job. But the important thing is to do it in private, so nobody will lose face”, in agreement with the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000). The subordinates agreed with the importance of avoiding public humiliation, giving loss of face as the reason. Amy (subordinate) suggested: “Being told off is not nice, but it is not the end of the world. As long as this is done because of a good reason and in private, so nobody loses face and the harmony is not affected”. Interestingly, both managers and subordinates stress the importance for all involved, not just for the subordinate but also for the manager. Yet, whilst public telling off would only equate in a loss of face for the

subordinate, this could also lead to a negative reputation for the manager and a barrier to the harmonious working environment.

Authoritarian domains of expected subordinate behaviour: compliance and dependency

This second section moves on to analyse the second set of questions and their answers. The model of paternalistic leadership defines leader behaviour and expected subordinate responses to those behaviours. This section aims to analyse subordinate behaviours to delineate whether those behaviours are a consequence of the paternalistic leader behaviours. There are four questions in this section, adapted from the questionnaire developed by Cheng et al. (2004).

The first question, “Do you completely obey your manager?”, aims at understanding the level of obedience that subordinates show their managers. Subordinates stressed that this was the case most of the time but interestingly, their answers were primarily centred on exceptions to this compliance. In general, the subordinates did not disobey orders out of differences of opinion or ideological views, but mostly because it was easier not to follow the orders and take shortcuts. The adoption of shortcuts which diverge from the manager’s instructions is aimed at saving time. Michael (subordinate), for example, was told to only secure procurement once satisfactory results from quality control were received, but Michael stressed:

“In order to make things easier, I didn’t wait for the results [of the quality control inspections] and just booked the slots for the shipment. I did it this way to save time. The problem came when the goods failed the quality control. At that point I had to tell my team leader of my mistake and that I didn’t follow her instructions”. Michael’s team leader was Phoebe who, when asked about this specific incident, stated: “ I do not really remember this case, but subordinates make all kind of mistakes; sometimes because they do not know and sometimes because they do not care. Most of the time I am quite relaxed” [...] “My subordinates are grown-ups, so it is not a problem”.

In her answer, Phoebe shows a rather relaxed approach towards the relationship with her subordinates. Based on these answers, follow up questions were asked to establish their personal view regarding this lack of compliance. The participants' answers centred on the idea that taking shortcuts when working is 'fine', even though they think it is wrong. Furthermore, the subordinates highlighted that so far there have not been any serious mistakes based on non-compliance, none that could not be solved without a few emails or telephone calls.

Mark (subordinate) described how if something does go wrong, subordinates rely on their managers to solve the issue: "It is common for people in my team, and I think in others, not to follow all the rules and to take shortcuts; sometimes things go wrong and we have to tell the manager, but this is never really a serious problem". Cindy (manager), Mark's manager, articulated that: "Rules are not always followed" [but] "the important thing is to treat people like family members, so we all get along". Whilst subordinates do not always obey their managers, they still depend on them to resolve any serious issues and overall, there are more instances of compliance than non-compliance.

The second question, "Do you abide the philosophy and methods to work of your manager?", had to be divided into two sections, work philosophy and work methodology, to aid comprehension. The idea of work philosophy created uncertainty among the participants, who could not really understand the meaning of philosophy of work. This lack of understanding and identification could be based on a translation problem or the lack of a similar term in their native language. Nothing relevant can be extracted from answers such as Rosa's (subordinate): "I am not sure what is work philosophy". Explanations were attempted by the interviewer and also by the local facilitator in later interviews, but none of these attempts produced any positive results.

Nevertheless, when looking at the overall data, examples of subordinates not following their managers' philosophy emerge in the section about completely obeying managerial orders (previous question), where it is clear that subordinates do not always follow their managers' directives and sometimes things go wrong because of this.

For the second section of the question, method of work, there were two emerging themes. Some of the subordinates stressed that they did not think that their manager cared whether their subordinates followed or abided by their methodology, as long as the work was completed and to a satisfactory standard. Claire (subordinate) stressed this point: "I do not think anyone really cares; the important thing is to get things done". Other subordinates acknowledged that they did not openly or consciously follow the methodologies of their managers, but that this is inevitable because people working together influence each other and subordinates are especially influenced by managers. Yet, as Madison (subordinate) stated, the stress was mostly put on influencing work and not on abiding by methodologies: "I am always influenced by the people I work with; I do not think the influence is on the way things are done specifically, but on general principles, like the way my manager interacts with difficult clients. I think I have been influenced by this, because I tend to copy her, but this is not a methodology". Managers did not place much importance on these issues and as Tina (manager) exemplifies: "in the end the work has to be done".

These answers show that subordinates had difficulty in understanding at least the first part of the question and for the second part, they did not display the expected behaviours. The subordinates acknowledged that they are influenced by the people that they work with, but this is presented as normal human interaction. The subordinates understand this influence as something

which will always happen in a work situation, in contrast to the identification of prescribed methodologies, as described in paternalistic leadership.

The subordinates were almost unanimous in their affirmative response to the third question, “When there is a new implementation, do you follow the methodology of work given by your manager?” The answers emphasised the belief that managers know more and better than anyone else in the team. Therefore, when a new situation occurs such as a new implementation it is natural to follow the advice and guidance of the managers. Amy’s (subordinate) answer typifies this belief: “When there is a new situation I think everyone follows the team leader’s instruction; they are the ones who know more; it is kind of common sense”. These answers agree with the expected behaviour of the subordinate from paternalistic leadership.

Most subordinates answered the final question, “Do you conform to the commands of your manager unconditionally?”, by stressing that they do not conform to commands unconditionally. Quite often it is wise to follow the command of managers, but they still have free will. Mark (subordinate) suggested: “It makes sense to follow the instruction of the team’s leaders most of the time, but it does not mean that I cannot think for myself”.

A small group of subordinates, both male and female, further clarified that quite often, they know better than their managers regarding specific issues. Amanda (subordinate) stressed that it would not be wise to follow her manager when considering technology: “I do respect my team’s leader but sometimes I know more than her. I am quite good with (Microsoft) Excel, better than her; I do not think I have to follow her advice with IT issues”. Selma (manager), who is Amanda’s manager, acknowledged: “Yes, some of my subordinates are better than me with the computer, but that is normal”.

However, overall, even though they may not always agree with their managers, subordinates believe that it is better to follow their advice to avoid problems and maintain a harmonious work environment. These answers present a clear departure from the expected behaviour described by Farh and Cheng, (2000). Also the responses show that subordinates see themselves as individuals with agency and in some cases, they think that they even know more than their managers.

Authoritarianism domain summary

The managerial behaviour of the female middle managers incorporates elements of the authoritarian domain of paternalistic leadership such as telling off employees. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, this might indicate mimicry of the hegemonic conceptualisation, aiming at assimilating the dominant conceptualisation, in order to fit organisational expectation about what is considered “normality” (Frenkel, 2008). However, in the current case study, most elements presented in the authoritarian domain of paternalistic leadership appeared less prominent than in the original conceptualisation. An example of this would be discipline, which is not as noticeable as described in the dominant conceptualisation but still present. Moreover, a need for managers to have the last word in meetings became clear from the participants, but only in important matters, showing some delegation in more trivial concerns. Paternalistic leadership stresses that leaders do not delegate, but the interviews show that delegation occurs in some cases.

The modification of elements of the expected behaviour creates “hybrid” behaviour among the managers (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). Here, female managers can create new ways of organising identities and workplace relations that depart from hegemonic conceptualisation presented by Farh and Cheng, (2000). This departure could be attributed to a number of factors;

some external to the managers, such as the management style of the senior management within the organisation or the influence of Western clients, but also personal decisions made by the managers, such as women must negotiate expectations of what it is to be a woman in a Chinese cultural context.

For instance, the fear of being seen as less feminine (Xian and Woodhams, 2008) may lead to the modification of the expected authoritarian behaviour. This could be an example of how some female study participants Other themselves from men, and the hegemonic conceptualisation. Moreover, paternalistic leadership (within the authoritarian domain) demands managers have control over everything, even trivial issues, but the female managers do not display this behaviour. Therefore, women may be opting to preserve their femininity, by only mimicking limited aspects of what is traditionally regarded as 'normal' authoritative behaviour within paternalistic leadership conceptualisation.

Finally, subordinates also lacked the expected responses to authoritarian leadership, as described by the model of paternalistic leadership. All of the answers contradicted the conceptualisations presented by Farh and Cheng, (2000), with the only exception being, following the work methodology of their managers. It cannot be argued that subordinates display compliance and dependency at all times. Considering the managers did not display all of the authoritarian behaviours, it is no surprise that the subordinates did not respond with the expected behaviour, but it undoubtedly adds evidence to the lack of authoritarian leadership. The wider implications of this finding may be that not only are the female managers creating hybrid ways of organising workplace relations as presented by Özkazanç-Pan, (2008), but the subordinates must also negotiate these workplace relations in a potentially hybrid way.

Benevolent domain

As with the authoritarian domain, the benevolent domain is the focus of two sets of questions: the first set was for all fifteen managers and all 30 subordinates, cross-referencing the answers from both groups; the second set of questions was only for the subordinates. The overall aim of both sets of questions was to establish the presence of the benevolent domain. This section analyses the answers to the first set of questions before moving on to the second set and providing a summary.

The first four questions of this section are designed to analyse the domain of benevolence as a construct of paternalistic leadership. These questions are: Do you take good care of your subordinates' personal lives? Do you behave in a family fashion when interacting with your subordinates? Do you take special care of the subordinate who has worked for you the longest? Do you try to understand your subordinates' problems when they are not performing well?

The first question focuses on the level of involvement of the leaders regarding their subordinates' personal lives. Paternalistic leadership expects leaders to show an interest in non-work related issues (personal life) concerning his/her subordinates (Chao and Farh, 2010). According to paternalistic leadership, leaders display a more holistic view of their subordinates when there is no distinction between private and work life (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006). The second question aims at establishing how much of a father-like figure, as presented in the description of the head of a family in a patriarchal family, the leader is when interacting with his/her subordinates. In this case, the objective is to identify whether the female managers display some kind of father-like behaviour, mimicking the hegemonic conceptualisation or whether they Other themselves from the "normal" leadership behaviour, aligning themselves to the traditional roles within Chinese culture, or whether they behave in a completely different,

unexpected way. The third question examines whether differences are made towards employees who have been working the longest for the leader to establish whether there is some kind of special relationship as a consequence of the extended working time. The paternalistic leadership model expects a special relationship among leaders and subordinates who have been working together for a long time (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Additionally, the issue of loyalty may be present, due to the ability of long-term relationships to demonstrate and foster reciprocal loyalty. Finally, the last question examines the issues that occur when poor performance is present, according to paternalistic leadership; leaders should take a holistic view when evaluating the performance of their subordinates (Chao et al., 2010). Leaders should also display a special concern towards their subordinates (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006); for instance, focusing on aspects of the subordinates' work or private life which could translate into poor working performance.

From a postcolonial feminist perspective, the benevolent domain of paternalistic leadership describes a behaviour that is close to the traditional role of women in traditional Chinese societies (Tang et al., 2010). Therefore, women may have fewer issues conforming to the expected behaviour. Yet, as argued throughout this thesis, paternalistic leadership only focuses on a male perspective of leadership, leaving out relevant gender issues that affect women. The following section is centred on understanding how these gender issues actually interact with the expected benevolent behaviour of the female managers and how they affect them.

For the first question, "Do you take good care of your subordinates' personal lives?", all managers unanimously answered that they think they do take care of their subordinates' personal lives. Managers such as Man stated: "Yes, me and all the managers get involved in the private

life of the subordinates, but you know, it is normal; it is a Chinese thing”. By stating this managers are inadvertently mobilising an essentialised construction of Chinese culture. This has resonances with Spivak's (1988) notion of strategic essentialism insofar as some of these participants might be using an essentialised notion of Chinese culture to explain and justify certain practices that might otherwise warrant more complex discussions and personal views. Mobilising essentialist understandings of Chinese culture can shut down debate on contentious issues and mask the diversity and hybrid qualities of a culture shaped by Chinese and Hong Kong values and practices.

Once this was acknowledged, the subsequent question was firstly aimed at establishing what these managers understood by care of subordinates' personal lives and how this is delivered. Based on this, a series of further questions were asked to clarify what “taking care of my subordinates' personal lives” meant to the managers. Participants mostly provided evidence centred on showing some kind of involvement (asking questions) in the personal affairs of their subordinates. Helen (manager) asks: “How is your son/daughter doing at school?”, whereas Christy (manager) prefers: “How is the health of your wife/husband?” Many managers did not elaborate as to why these questions or their answers might be useful, but Phoebe (manager) thought: “It is not only important to ask about their private lives, but more important is to judge how non-work events influence their work”. Phoebe and several other managers established that a good manager is also able to relate to and evaluate the personal circumstances of their subordinates, especially at the time of evaluating their performance and assigning new tasks. Phoebe (manager) went on to stress how this was not merely part of her role as written in the job description, but something she feels she should do: “Taking a personal interest in my

subordinates is not just an expectation, I must know how they are doing outside the office so I understand them better; sometimes personal problems can affect the work in the office”.

When the managers were asked if they thought that the gender of the managers influences the relationships between subordinates and managers, they stated that they did not think the gender of the manager influences the quality/closeness of the relationship. However, it later transpired that most of the female managers profess to have close relationships with most of their subordinates (regardless of their gender); their closest relationships are predominantly with female subordinates. A few of the managers even described family-like relationships with their female subordinates, suggesting that they are similar to an adopted member of their family, a “little sister”.

Phoebe (manager): (During the festive season) “I give a red envelope to Emma [also working in the same team but not interviewed because she was not available] because we are close, like family and I consider her to be my little sister”.

Interviewer: “Aren’t you all supposed to have a family-like environment in the office and to interact as a family?”

Phoebe (manager): “Yes, but my relationship with Emma is bigger; I have adopted her [in a symbolic way], she is like part of my close family”.

Cross referencing the managers and subordinates’ answers reveals some similarities. Subordinates agreed with their managers by highlighting that all of their managers show some concern. When asked about the level of involvement, the subordinates highlighted that it was dependant on the quality of the relationship. Paul (subordinate): “I think most people tell their managers the important things that happen in their [private] life, but the level of detail, it depends [...] it depends on how close subordinates are to their managers”. Finally, a few subordinates

expressed their reservations regarding sharing personal details with managers. John (subordinate): “I think some people are quite reserved [regarding their personal circumstances] because they want to avoid office gossip”. Subordinates also corroborated the closeness of some relationships between some female managers and some subordinates who are unofficially adopted as members of their families, but none of them elaborated on the issue.

As expected and described by Farh and Cheng (2000), there is personal involvement of managers in their subordinates’ personal lives, but this involvement is more complex than presented in the model. This process appears to have two essential factors to consider. The first factor is the subordinate’s willingness to open up and share with the manager, and the second factor is the competence of the manager in creating an environment conducive to sharing. Remarkably, while it appears that most relationships are close within the team, it is only the female managers and female subordinates who develop relationships close enough to adopt co-workers/subordinates and take them as members of their close family. This closeness and family adoption displays a bond and solidarity that has so far been omitted from the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. This omission could be due to a series of reasons; perhaps this close bond is simply not generated among male managers and any other employee, male or female, or perhaps the bond is generated but for some reason not openly demonstrated and/or accepted, or simply because previous research has not focused on this specific area. In any case, it is important to bear in mind, when looking into previous research in paternalistic leadership and its omissions, the fact that conceptualisation is in itself gendered in terms of men and masculinity, consequently, ignoring the possibilities for the feminine to be expressed in ways that are empowering and intimate.

For the second question, “Do you behave in a family fashion when interacting with your subordinates?”, there was also a unified, positive view, based on the idea that they behave in a family fashion. Based on this, a series of follow up questions were formulated, aimed at establishing what participants meant by a family fashion.

Interviewer: “What does it mean to behave in a family fashion?”

Sarah (manager): “Well, to treat everyone as if they were members of a family, I treat my subordinates as if they were my younger brothers or/and sisters, I try to help them with any problems that they have”.

Interviewer: “At work or outside?”

Sarah (manager): “Both”.

Interviewer: “And do they help you with your personal problems?”

Sarah (manager): “Only when I ask them”.

There is a clear distinction to be made, which has been overlooked by previous conceptualisations presented by Farh and Cheng (2000), regarding behaving in a family fashion. Managers are free and expected to get involved in their subordinates lives, but subordinates are only expected to do so when asked. As presented by Peter, Sarah’s subordinate, as an example of many other testimonies from subordinates: “My manager[(Sarah) asks me, about my things but I do not ask her”]; Interviewer: “ why?”; Peter (subordinate): “I do not know”. Based on these, and many other testimonies, it is clear that subordinates must be invited into the personal lives of their leaders, exposing an uneven power relationship and control of how much involvement the manager allows.

The female managers repeatedly articulated, explicitly and implicitly, their concerns regarding being perceived as less feminine due to their role as leaders, and what that means in a Chinese cultural context. Christy exemplifies this concern shared by the managers: “I worry about the way in which other people in the office see me, to me, and I think most of the women in this office, it is very important to be seen as women, delicate and gentle and not as strong and driven”. The managers’ concerns show an attempt to conform to the traditional female role in Chinese societies, to avoid being seen as strong and driven, often associated with masculinity. When interacting with their team members they diverge from paternalism, using behaviour associated with masculinity but in a more feminine way. The female managers conform to traditional Chinese views of how a woman should behave, by not leading as a father-like figure. Yet, in this case, they display agency in a move away from the hegemonic conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, simultaneously Othering themselves in the process of creating a hybrid form of leadership, negotiating elements of both conceptualisation as presented by (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008).

When the subordinates were asked, they also articulated that their managers treat them as a younger brother/sister, as family members. Consequently, the subordinates were asked to give examples of this behaviour and some of the answers were: providing guidance and advice in work, asking personal questions regarding their personal lives, paying for dinners and/lunches, and always trying to set an example to be followed by their subordinates.

Maria (subordinate): “It is common that my manager pays for lunch when we go out, I do not know if you know this but in China you do not split the bill like you do; that is wrong, Here people fight to pay, but when I go for lunch with my manager, it is kind of funny; we fight, or pretend to fight ha-ha, and then she pays”.

Interviewer: “Why does she pay?”

Maria (subordinate): “I do not know, but I think this is the right way to do, so senior people pay”.

Phoebe (manager) provided a typical answer to the third question, “Do you take special care of the subordinate who has worked for you the longest?” with: “When you work closely with another for a long time, tighter relationships are developed; a form of attachment grows”. However, the “normal” answer was contrasted by Elizabeth who stated: “Even when people work together and try their best, they do not always get along, because people are different”.

The answers suggest that on the one hand, managers tend to get close to the people they have worked with the longest, but on the other hand, frictions are present. An open acknowledgement that team members do not always work well together potentially challenges the idea of harmony within teams. Subordinates did not feel in a position to answer these questions; some of them attributed this due to a lack of an extended time working for the organisation.

For the fourth question, “Do you try to understand what your subordinates’ problems are when they are not performing well?”, the participants answered in an affirmative manner, stating that they do try to understand, work related and non-work related, subordinate problems, supporting the paternalistic leadership perspective of treating subordinates holistically. However, within these answers, two themes emerged from the participants’ elaborations. A minority group of managers believed that personal problems should not be brought to work, as Winnie (manager) stated: “If people have problems outside work, they should make an effort to for this problem not to affect their work”. Essentially, managers stressed that employees should leave their problems at home.

This view shows a departure from paternalistic leadership which states that there is no division between work-related and private issues (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006). The other group of managers held a view closer to agreeing with traditional Chinese values and the expectations of leaders from the theory of paternalistic leadership, highlighted by Samantha's (manager) view that: "People cannot leave their personal problems at home; if someone has a family problems, it is unrealistic to expect them to forget about it when they come to work". In this instance, female managers are divided into two groups: one that agrees with hegemonic conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership and one that distance themselves from it. Consequently, female leadership is far from homogeneous in terms of attitudes and behaviours, providing evidence of women's agency and choices.

When subordinates were asked these questions, most stated that they did not know how to answer, and justified their lack of certainty by stating that they have never really performed badly at work; as Amy stated: "I do a good job, always". The remaining smaller group stressed that they did not really know how their managers evaluate their performance. Mark (subordinate) offered: "I have an idea, but I do not know much how my managers see me every day". It is relevant to single out that subordinates manifested that they are not aware of how their managers perceived them; this could be an honest answer, but subordinates may also be unwilling to provide an answer that could lead to loss of face in the eyes of the interviewer.

Benevolent domain expected subordinate behaviour: Indebtedness and obligation to repay

According to the model of paternalistic leadership presented by Farh and Cheng (2000), subordinates are expected to display a specific behaviour for each of the three domains of paternalistic model. The following subsection aims at evaluating whether the subordinates

display the expected behaviour when the benevolent domain is present. In this case, the behaviour from the subordinates should be indebtedness and obligation to repay towards the person in a leading role. This section has five questions that were directly put to the subordinates. All the subordinates replied affirmatively to the first question, “When you have the opportunity, will you repay the kindness of your manager?” Furthermore, a few subordinates such as Sofia stressed that repaying kindness (with kindness) is part of Chinese culture and that nobody would decline to do it. Winnie, Rosa’s manager also agreed on the importance of kindness and stated: “Everyone should be kind to each other”. Sofia (subordinate) stated: “Repaying kindness is a basic social principle; maybe you do not know this because you are not Chinese, but nobody will openly admit not doing it”.

These actions are embedded in Chinese culture and therefore an expected behaviour from Chinese subordinates (Farh et al., 2008). The unanimity of the answers shows that all subordinates behaved as expected in Chinese culture regarding kindness, and it is therefore possible to assume that this is currently a relevant traditional Chinese value, consequently, corroborating the expected behaviour on subordinates in the case of repayment.

When asked, “Do you appreciate the kindness of your manager?”, all participants agreed that they think their managers are kind to them, as is expected from a manager in a Chinese culture (Farh et al., 2008). They also stated that they appreciate the kindness displayed by their managers and valued them. Yet, a small group of participants confessed that they think their managers could be kinder, highlighting that they feel their manager is merely displaying the minimum kindness that a Chinese manager should display. Claire (subordinate) stressed that she thought her manager was only trying to comply with the social expectation: “Yes, managers are

kind, but some of them, you can tell they are kind because they have to be; this is expected in Chinese culture; I do not think they are because they want to be”. Interestingly, Claire’s manager Mandy articulated: “Everyone is kind to each other; this is the way in which Chinese people interact; it’s a Chinese thing”, and with her answer, the participant evidences how participants engage in strategic essentialism by refereeing to what is expected and accepted in Chinese culture, and not giving a personal answer that might disagree with the expected answer.

A small group of participants think that their managers are kind, but only because it is the socially expected norm of behaviour (Farh et al., 2008), meeting the social expectation but lacking any real sincerity. Subordinates, in a way, corroborate that kindness is present in the relationship with their managers, but they also question the authenticity of it, showing that this kindness is potentially not as prominent as the model suggests.

None of the subordinates replied positively to the third question, “Would you work for your manager, even if it meant sacrificing your own interest?” There was a subgroup of some subordinates such as Rosa who stressed: “Part of my job is to help my managers as much as possible, even to help them in non-work related matters”. Yet, overall, all participants stated that the idea of personal sacrifice was exaggerated. In Chinese culture, the boundaries between work and personal life are less marked than in western societies (Thein et al., 2010); therefore, subordinates are willing to help managers in private affairs (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Yet, for some reason, the idea of sacrifice was just too much for the subordinates. Based on this, a subsequent question was asked to establish what the participants understood by sacrificing. The common answer showed an understanding of sacrifice centred on the idea of doing something

which may be detrimental to their careers or personal lives and they were not willing to do this. However, these answers were also somewhat vague.

Answers to the question “Would you take responsibility for your manager’s mistakes?” provided two distinctive themes. The first theme showed that subordinates think that most of the time, if things go wrong, the responsibility should fall on the entire working team; yet the manager, in his or her managerial position, should take most of the responsibility. This line of thinking is exemplified by Marta (subordinate): “When things go wrong, it is the team’s responsibility; if you want to single someone out, it should be the leader, but really it is the group”. In contrast, the other theme focuses on the personal responsibility of the managers, as stressed by John (subordinate): “If a manager is responsible for something, he or she should take personal responsibility, no one else”. Both themes present a departure from the paternalistic leadership model; both oppose the premise that subordinates should take responsibility for their managers, departing from a more traditional hierarchical view of the relationship. It is clear from the answers that the expected behaviour of the subordinates is not present.

This subordinate departure could be based on the fact that, regarding benevolence, female managers also do not behave as expected. Therefore, subordinates do not respond with the expected behaviour described in the hegemonic conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, which does not take into account women and their behaviour in leadership positions. This might indicate that this element of the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership is simply outdated, and or not relevant to younger people, as less traditional people tend to be less responsible to paternalistic leadership (Chao et al., 2010). This finding does not mean that women do not display benevolence, as benevolence is a basic cultural Chinese value traversing the social

spectrum. Yet, women in managerial positions display their benevolence in a different way to that described in paternalistic leadership.

For the last question, “Would you help your manager with her private business?”, a large group of subordinates made it clear that their overall job is to help their managers; therefore, if their managers needed some non-work related help, they would be willing to do it. As Thein, et al. (2010) have established, in Chinese cultured societies, there is less prominence between the private and professional areas; therefore, it is much more difficult to establish when a manager is abusing her position of power and asking for things that are out of place. Yet, a pertinent question would be where to draw the line. How far are subordinates willing to go to support their managers? As previously highlighted, it has not been possible to establish this, and further research is needed for this case.

Benevolent domain analysis

Based on the collected data, it is possible to establish that elements of the benevolent domain of paternalistic leadership are present; however, these elements were observed in different ways among managers. Answers to the questions present a new way of looking at behaviours not previously articulated in the literature review; for instance, managers pay attention to their subordinates’ personal lives, but this involvement varies between relationships and is much more complex than previously presented.

The interviews have shown that even though people related as family members, hierarchies were preserved. Moreover, the data challenge the idea that managers make distinctions based on the amount of time that they have been working with their subordinates, as a new social working dynamic in Hong Kong sees less loyalty within jobs. Finally, managers

stated that they try to understand their subordinates' problems, but there was also an emerging view that people should behave in a professional way and somehow make a distinction between personal problems and the office, somehow challenging the idea presented by Thein et al. (2010), where these two domains are unified.

Overall, the managers appear unanimous in their answers when first questioned, later showing signs of disparity, showing a general agreement in the overall behaviour, but differing on what it means and how it is applied. The subordinates' behaviour does not always follow the described behaviours presented in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, and kindness is also challenged by the subordinates and presented as a basic social expectation. Subordinates were also unwilling to sacrifice themselves for their managers, providing a new understanding of their relationship with management within their answers. Overall, the subordinates departed from the expected behaviours described by the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, providing new findings for this study.

Benevolence is a basic Chinese cultural value, shared among the social collective. Yet, the concept of paternalistic leadership only views it from a male perspective as it is gendered in terms of men and masculinity, excluding the benevolence that other members of society (such as female managers) might exhibit and the singularities of their benevolence, thereby creating a dominate conceptualisation based on masculinity and ignoring any other alternative or possible behaviour.

The fear of being perceived as less feminine among female managers undoubtedly has an impact on their behaviour. This understanding of femininity is based on the expectations of how women should behave in a traditional Chinese society, as part of the gender stereotypes

commonly held, for example, displaying gentle manners. Consequently, managers may feel trapped between two contrasting expected behaviours: the expectations of paternalistic leadership and the expectations of the traditional role of women in Chinese society.

As a result, some managers in this case opt to distance themselves from the male behaviour and create a new benevolence in their leadership that does not threaten their femininity, behaviour closer to the traditional female role in Chinese society. This departure shows how women in leadership create a hybrid identity as a female manager (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008), which departs from the hegemonic conceptualisation of leadership. This new behaviour aims at reconciling the idea of leadership with the social expectation of how a woman should behave, creating a hybrid form of leadership.

Moral domain

The current section analyses the moral domain of paternalistic leadership. The section follows the same structure as the previous two, subdivided into two sets of questions. The first section consists of a set that were put to all fifteen managers and 30 subordinates, cross-referencing the answers from both groups. The aim of these questions is to establish whether the managers display the expected leadership behaviour within the moral domain of paternalistic leadership. The second set of questions was only put to the subordinates. The aim is to establish whether subordinates display the expected subordinate behaviour described by the model of paternalistic leadership when subordinates are in the presence of the moral domain of paternalistic leadership.

The first four questions of this section are designed to analyse the morality domain of paternalistic leadership as displayed by the managers. These questions are: Do you use your

employees for personal gain? Do you take personal credit for the achievement of the team? Do you take revenge on people who have offended you for the collective interest? Do you use *Guanxi* to obtain personal gains?

The first question, “Do you use your employees for personal gain?”, focuses on the use that a leader makes of his or her position of power. A characteristic of paternalistic leadership is the asymmetrical power relationships that empower the leader. Yet, and in agreement with Confucian philosophy, a good leader should be a virtuous leader with high moral standards (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Therefore, this question is designed to assess whether the leader abuses his or her unchallenged position of power when interacting with his/her subordinates.

The second question, “Do you take personal credit for the achievement of the team?”, is linked to the principle that a leader should not put personal interests ahead of collective interests. Good leaders, according to paternalistic leadership, are expected to make sacrifices and put the interest of the group ahead of their own (Farh and Cheng, 2000). The third question, “Do you take revenge on people who have offended you for the collective interest?”, is linked to the idea that leaders should reject egocentric, personal impulses to gain the moral ground; the leader is always a role model for the subordinates (Farh and Cheng, 2000). An example of this moral behaviour could be if somebody causes the leader to lose face, and the leader does not reciprocate or seek revenge.

Finally, the fourth question, “Do you use *Guanxi* to obtain personal gain?”, is linked to the traditional way of networking in China, through *Guanxi*, which is the way non-formal relationships are established for personal gain. *Guanxi* is prominent in Chinese culture, but the moral issue this question aims to determine is whether *Guanxi* is used for the benefit of the

company (which should be considered a positive use) or for personal gain (a negative use) (Hussain et al., 2010).

Unsurprisingly, participants responded negatively to the first question, “Do you use your employees for personal gain?”, as this is not socially accepted in Chinese or Western culture. Further questioning did not reveal deeper responses, but the most detailed answers were given by various managers who stressed the problems around differentiating between personal and professional issues. Tina (manager): “This is difficult to tell” [...] “because in the end, the job of the subordinates is to help their team leader”. Subordinates also responded negatively to the same question, as was expected. Therefore, a subsequent question was asked to explore whether employees helped their managers in private matters. Eventually, examples of subordinates doing chores for their managers emerged and these examples ranged from booking holidays for managers, going to the shops to buy lunch/coffee for them, or picking up clothes from the dry cleaner. Amy (subordinate) highlighted one personal task she carries out for her manager: “Sometimes on my way back to the office after my lunch time I pick up her dry cleaning, I do not think my managers gets any personal advantage for that. I see it as part of the relationship; it is part of my job to help her”. Overall, none of the subordinates perceived this as being used for their manager’s personal gain; the subordinates took a holistic view based on the idea that this was part of their job because their role was to help their managers and team.

When the chores asked of subordinates are closely examined, a clear subgroup emerges. A few of the chores articulated by both managers and subordinates are clearly family caring responsibilities, such as calling the school to notify them that one of the manager’s children is sick, making a doctor’s appointment for a relative and picking up clothes from the dry cleaner, as

stated earlier, among others. When managers such as Phoebe were asked if male managers also asked their subordinates to do these family caring chores, managers answered negatively, making it clear that only women do these kinds of chores: “No male managers would do this; these are women’s jobs”. The fact that female managers receive help from their subordinates regarding family issues adds a new dimension to their managerial role and the relationship with their subordinates, a dimension that has been overlooked by the dominant conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. In this case, female managers merge both their family responsibilities and their identities with their professional resources to create a new hybrid dynamic (Özkazancı-Pan, 2008), where family issues and professional resources are intertwined for their ‘benefit’.

The second question, “Do you take personal credit for the achievements of the team?”, was greeted with refutation, as expected. The managers stressed that it is important to have a harmonious working environment and that all members of the team should relate to each other as a family; any attempt to obtain personal gain over the team would be perceived in a negative way (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Tina (manager) further clarified why no manager would ever take credit from another member in their team: “There is no real need for any team leader to take personal credit for group achievement, because people will credit her with any achievement of the team. This is natural in Chinese culture”. Furthermore, Maria (manager) articulated: “Only a really insecure leader will try to take personal credit for a group achievement”. Subordinates agreed with the view that credit goes directly to the team leader because he or she is the leader and the most experienced. However, Claire (subordinate) stressed that Eric would have no issue in praising subordinates: “If a specific achievement required a specific member of the team to be granted credit, Eric, the general manager [and owner of the company] would ensure that nobody else takes that credit”.

In contrast to the unanimous negative answers to the previous questions, the third question, “Do you take revenge on people who have offended you for the collective interest?”, divided participants into two distinctive groups. One group of managers stressed that they would not take revenge, but the other group (similar in size) stated that while they would not, others might and it is not uncommon. Interestingly, the managers, who stated that it is not uncommon to take revenge stressed that in Chinese culture, revenge taking may go unnoticed due to the subtlety it demands. Open confrontation is strongly discouraged in Chinese culture, as discussed in the literature review. Confrontation contradicts harmony among people, and a harmonious working environment. Yet, none of the participants made this explicit connection with harmony. If a person did want to take revenge on another, it would have to be done in such a way that the perpetrator would never be identified. An example of this can be seen from Samantha’s (manager) interview:

“After an incident in which someone felt offended, a folder with important papers disappeared from the desk of the offender; nobody knew why or how; many theories and stories were told from this incident like the cleaners wrongly putting it into the rubbish or someone had taken it by mistake. In the end this folder never reappeared but in the back of everyone's mind there will always be a doubt regarding if this was a coincidence, or if the person who got offended just got back at the aggressor”.

In agreement with the managers, subordinates also accounted for issues of revenge taking. Paul (subordinate) highlighted: “People sometimes fight for resources [the use of company van, for example]”. This assertion is played down by Eric, the general manager, who suggested: “These are mostly isolated cases”. Subordinates discussed the need to avoid confrontation, while simultaneously acknowledging that in Chinese culture, people may seek revenge on those who offend them, corroborating, as Claire (subordinate) stated that revenge “rarely happens openly”.

Furthermore, subordinates confirmed Samantha's (manager) example of how Chinese people settle the score and finally, several agreed with Mark (subordinate) that: "Chinese people are very patient and that getting back at someone could literally take years".

Conflict and arguments over resources within the organisation are expected, but the description and insights on exacting retribution in this context presents a new perspective on interaction. Revenge is taken in a way that does not affect the harmony of the organisation, presenting further evidence of the importance of keeping a harmonious working environment. Interestingly, this harmony does not deter avengers; it just forces people to do it in a way that harmony remains unaffected.

Answers concerning the final question, "Do you use *Guanxi* to obtain personal gain?", were difficult to classify, and a number of themes emerged. A small group of participants stressed that they did not. However, a larger group stressed the difficulty of establishing whether *Guanxi* was used for personal reasons or for the benefit of the entire business. The difficulty in deciding the use of *Guanxi*, they said, is due to its very nature. As Elizabeth (manager) stated, this is "because *Guanxi* is personal", and is often a personal resource. The difficulty in identification was explained by Selma (manager) who stated: "*Guanxi* is personal; it is not possible to make a division when it is use for personal of business reasons". *Guanxi* is a type of human capital and upon leaving a company, the employee will take their *Guanxi* with them, even if this *Guanxi* was developed and nurtured while working in a specific company. *Guanxi* belongs to the person who owns it, not the company (Hussain et al., 2010).

All subordinates declared that they did not know whether their managers did such a thing. It is pertinent to highlight that even if the use of *Guanxi* is normal in Chinese business practice,

its use for personal gain is not viewed positively (Hussain et al., 2010). Therefore, an admission from the managers would be unlikely, even if they did use *Guanxi* for personal gain. On the other hand, they would probably try to hide it from their subordinates, which would mean they would be less able to answer the question.

Moral domain expected subordinate behaviour; Identification and modelling

According to the model of paternalistic leadership presented by Farh and Cheng (2000), subordinates are expected to display a specific behaviour for each of the three domains of paternalistic model. The following subsection aims to evaluate whether the subordinates display the expected behaviour when the moral domain is present. In this case, the subordinate behaviour should be respect and identification towards the leader. This section has eight questions that were put directly to the subordinates.

Answers to the first question, “Do you admire your manager?”, were mostly unified; it was clear that subordinates did not admire their managers. However, a number of subordinates expressed that they understood the word “admire” as an extreme, but they acknowledged that they respected their managers. Peter’s (subordinate) understanding of the wording, “Admire might be too much. But I think we all respect them”, is mirrored in the ideas of Stella (subordinate), who asked rhetorically: “Admire? I do not think so, but we learn from them”. Answers to this question show that subordinates respect their leaders yet they do not admire them, as presented in the model of paternalistic leadership. None of the managers stated in any way, directly or indirectly, that they actually seek admiration. Yet, this could be associated with the Chinese value of humbleness, as presented by Lee et al. (2008).

According to answers to the second question, “Do you tell your colleagues about the merits of your manager?”, none of the subordinates share the merits of their managers with their colleagues. Yet, a small group of subordinates articulated that if something extraordinary happened, it was shared with colleagues. These cases were mostly about the management or mismanagement of a specific issue, as exemplified in Claire’s (subordinate) interview: “When something not normal happens in the team, I tend to share it with other people, but it does not mean that it is always good; quite often I also share stories about things that went wrong”.

In addition, two other subordinates who declared very close relationships with their managers affirmed that they did talk about the merits of their managers as managers. However, they stressed that they did this not from a managerial perspective, but because they have a close relationship and the sharing is mostly based on personal day-to-day issues. Consequently, they admitted to sometimes talking about their merits but from a personal point of view. For example, Paul (subordinate) shared: “My manager is a good cook”. Paul, in this case, gives an example of his manager that involves a chore traditionally associated with women, cooking. Paul praises his manager for an ability that is not related to her professional domain but rather, to the traditional role of women in Chinese society. In essence, none of the subordinates publicise the merits of their managers from a work perspective. Overall there is little evidence to suggest that subordinates talk about the merits of their managers as expected from the model of paternalistic leadership. The answers depict subordinates discussing their managers in a holistic way, rather than focusing on their professional merits. Yet, based on this, it is clear that subordinates do not see their managers only in a professional way as described in the model of paternalistic leadership. This could potentially be the cause of why some subordinates make fun of the marital status of some managers, as they see them also as potential, wives or mothers to be.

Several themes emerged from the third question, “Are you internalizing the values of your manager?” A group of subordinates articulated that they did not really know if this was the case. These subordinates struggled to understand the question, even though it was repeatedly explained to them. A further group gave unclassifiable answers, such as that of Amy (subordinate): “Values are important; we all have values”. The remaining subordinates, the majority, answered that they do. Therefore, these subordinates were asked for further clarification. Ultimately, the subordinates argued that working together long hours leads to managers influencing subordinates in general working practices and also specific aspects of behaviour. Marta (subordinate) highlighted this point: “We work in the team long hours, so it is normal that we received the influence of the managers”. The two values that were prominently present in all the interviews were hard work and loyalty, as values shared by both managers and subordinates. Based on these answers, it is not possible to establish whether subordinates feel any specific identification towards their managers. Subordinates did state they are influenced by their managers due to the close working relationship, but this is far from the expected behaviour of paternalistic leadership.

When asked, “Do you personally feel identified with the philosophy of work of your manager?”, none of the subordinates considered that they have developed any type of identification regarding the working philosophies of their managers. Additionally, further clarification of the meaning of “philosophies of work” had to be given in several cases, leading to the belief that the question was inappropriate or well formulated, as seen from Rosa’s (subordinate) interview: “I don’t know what you mean, ‘philosophy of work’ (explanation) Ho! I see; no, I don’t even know what her philosophy of work is, so I don’t think I can follow it”. Following on from the previous question, it is not possible to establish whether subordinates feel

any specific identification towards their managers. However, it could also be argued that negative answers were given due to that subordinates' lack of comprehension.

Participants provided an almost unified answer to the fifth question, "Do you always agree with the views and opinions of your manager?" The subordinates acknowledged that sometimes they agree and sometimes they do not; agreement is dependent on the issue. Furthermore, John (subordinate) provides one example of the undesirability of disagreement among subordinates and their managers: "Disagreement is never openly discussed and managers always resolve the disagreements, [...] none of us [subordinates] want to openly disagree with managers". Disagreements, being undesired, can be related to the importance of a harmonious workplace, which is articulated by Mark (subordinate): "I do not think that anyone really can agree 100% with their managers but if we do not agree we do not make it explicit". Interviewer: "Why not?" Mark (subordinate): "To keep harmony".

Subordinates, in this case, depart from the traditional view of paternalistic leadership where subordinates should always agree with the views of the manager (Farh and Cheng, 2000). Subordinates openly expressed that they sometimes disagree with their managers, but these disagreements are not openly discussed. Regarding the expected subordinate behaviour, it could be argued that there is an element of respect from the subordinates, who will not openly challenge their managers even though they might not always agree with them.

Answers to the sixth question, "Do you think that your manager has a good evaluation of the future?", show three emerging themes. Several subordinates answered in agreement with the idea of a good evaluation from their managers, as Jerry (subordinate) stated: "Yes, I think she has a good evaluation for what is coming; she has a lot of experience and I know she knows what

is best”. Selma (manager), Jerry’s manager, spoke about her working experience in this regard: “I think that my working experience is what put me ahead from my subordinates; it is all about experience”.

Yet, there were some subordinates, such as Madison (subordinate), who did not know how to answer the question: “I do not know what she thinks of the future”, and the remaining subordinates stressed, in agreement with Claire (subordinate) that: “More than a good evaluation of the future, I have a general sense of trust [trust in their decisions] for my manager”. Further clarification was sought from the subordinates who answered positively and the justifications given were based on the idea that middle managers have more experience and therefore a better evaluation of the future, as Amy (subordinate) stated: “I think my manager has quite a lot of experience, so she can have better evaluations of the future”. As previously discussed, the answers to the question present three divergent themes in relation to the expected behaviour; some subscribe to the expected behaviour, but others do not. Interestingly, most of the subordinates do not display the expected behaviour.

When answering the final question, “Do you think that your manager always takes the right decisions?”, all stated, in different ways, that they know that their managers sometimes make the wrong decision. Rosa (subordinate) and several other subordinates stated: “This is an undesirable outcome not only because nobody likes making mistakes, but also because when managers were aware that their subordinates were aware of the mistake, their managers lost face”. In contrast, other subordinates such as Peter (subordinate) stressed: “I don’t really think this was a problem; nobody likes to make mistakes, but we all make them”. Subordinates do not

see their managers in an idealized way; they understand that they are normal people who sometimes make mistakes, a belief which contradicts the expected behaviour.

Moral domain analysis

When analysing the relevance of the moral domain of paternalistic leadership among participants, there is the central issue of response bias; participants wish to give what he or she believes to be the morally right answer, as Roy et al. (2001) have argued in their research. The questions all describe a socially desirable behaviour which, in addition to the concept of loss of face, undoubtedly influences the answers, consequently, demonstrating how the concept of face saving is still relevant in Hong Kong society.

At a deeper level of analysis, it is possible to identify some of the expected moral behaviours conceptualised in the model of paternalistic leadership. In response to the first question, participants do not openly admit to using their employees for personal gain, yet some participants stressed that even if the task required was not beneficial to the company, the subordinates were expected to help the leader. Subordinates take a holistic view of what helping their leader means and do not focus on the evaluation of each specific task. In addition, the second question revealed a unified response, which shows that taking personal credit for the group not only contradicts the moral domain of paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000), but also the social expectation and etiquette of Chinese culture; taking personal credit goes against the actual social role of a good leader.

Responses to the third question also show that there are important socio-cultural factors present in the Chinese context such as the need to keep a harmonious environment, which is reflected in the moral domain of paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000). However,

answers also indicate that people are willing to take revenge, which contradicts the expected behaviour. In addition, answers to these questions also show the mechanism that Chinese people have developed to avenge themselves without disturbing the harmonious environment. Yet, as previously identified by Smith (2010), it is also clear in this case that further research on revenge taking in Chinese societies is needed. In addition, studies on counterproductive work behaviour could also yield further insights into the dynamics of revenge taking in culturally Chinese organisations; yet, as presented by Ng, Chen and Aryee (2012), most of the studies on counterproductive work behaviour have been linked to abusive supervision and not to inter-employees' conflict, where gender and gender roles also play a part. Unfortunately, these areas of research are currently outside the scope of the research project.

Guanxi, as shown in the responses to the final question, is a complicated concept which plays a difficult role in the evaluation of the moral domain. None of the participants explicitly stated that it was right to use *Guanxi* for personal gain, and groups of participants were in agreement that it is not desirable to use *Guanxi* for personal gain. The participants' understanding of *Guanxi* shows that these aspects of moral leadership are present in the current case study. In contrast, subordinates did not display the expected behaviour. For instance, even though they respect their managers, they do not admire them. Subordinates do not specifically talk about the merits of their managers, and identification was attributed to the fact that subordinates work closely with managers and not to any specific relationship. Moreover, subordinates may not always agree with the views of their managers, but they are not willing to openly challenge them. Whilst there is some acknowledgement that managers have a good evaluation of the future, it is clear that subordinates do not always think that their managers make the right decisions. It may be possible to establish that managers quite often behave

according to the expected behaviour of the moral domain of paternalistic leadership. Yet, the cause of this still remains unclear. Is this the case because of the presence of paternalistic leadership in the working environment or because these moral facts are part of a larger picture of Chinese culture?

In this case, it is remarkable how women in managerial positions interplay their role as managers with their familial responsibilities, utilising resources and relationships from their professional life to meet family demands. These are demands that their male colleagues do not have placed upon them because of both the traditional and contemporary social arrangements that appear to exempt men in this way. This behaviour gives the moral domain of paternalistic leadership a new perspective, historically overlooked, due to the male bias of paternalistic leadership, where family responsibilities affect moral behaviour and where women redefine and interplay both their professional identity with their family responsibilities.

Conclusion

The current chapter has analysed the behaviour of managers in relation to the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. The analysis was conducted using each of the three domains of paternalistic leadership, authoritarian, benevolent, and moral, as separate constructs. For this case, managers and their subordinates were interviewed to cross reference answers.

Some general findings have emerged from the analysis within the current chapter. For example, it is clear that there is a constant need in the organisation to create and maintain a harmonious working environment. This is exemplified by the subordinates, who disagree with their managers but who do not challenge them openly. However, the responses have been analysed with caution due to the possibility of Chinese context dependant response bias, whereby

Chinese respondents will tell the interviewer what they think the interviewer wants to hear (Roy et al., 2001). Finally, even though both the foreign interviewer and the local facilitator tried to explain several times, some of the questions were not understood by the participants and as a result, they had to be omitted.

The analysis shows that some elements of the three domains from the conceptualisation are present in the organisation, but the interviews reveal that their presence is not as predominant as described in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. The weak presence of the authoritarian domain in this analysis could be linked to the fear of losing femininity held by women in culturally Chinese societies, as established by Xian and Woodhams (2008). Women renegotiate their identity as women and leaders, together with aspects of authoritarian leadership, in accordance with the social expectation of how women should behave. Therefore, the expected behaviour of women in Chinese society becomes more prominent in their behaviour than the authoritarian domain of paternalistic leadership, of which some aspects are notably missing. The participants describe decision-making as less hierarchical, as long as the matters in question are not serious. However, sometimes the managers believed subordinates wanted them to take certain decisions, showing subordinates expect some leadership behaviours in accordance with the conceptualization of paternalistic leadership.

Within the benevolent domain, a new understanding of behaviours starts to emerge, centred on the interaction between managers and subordinates and their interest in their personal lives. The participants allow insights into how people interact within small teams in a family fashion, and the diminishing importance of the timespan of working relationships when concerned with the quality of the relationship. Finally, even though the relationship between

private and professional life is ambiguous, there are signs of division in some of the answers, diverging from the expected behaviours of paternalistic leadership. Overall, there is evidence of the principles presented by the model of paternalistic leadership, but the explanation and reasons for them are quite different.

The expected behaviours are weak concerning the moral domain as a whole. As described, subordinates do not admire but respect their managers; subordinates do not talk about the merits of their managers; values are not internalised; subordinates do not always agree with their managers, even if they do not openly contradict them to keep the harmony; and managers do not always seem to make the right decision. These situations suggest that managers do not display the expected behaviours as described by the model of paternalistic leadership to any great extent.

Finally, the subordinates only display some of the expected behaviours described in the model of paternalistic leadership. Subordinates behave as expected when concerned with willingness to repay the kindness of their managers, but a lack of sharing their managers' merits shows divergence from these behaviours. Yet, this may be explained by age and *traditionality*; notably, younger people (presumably less traditional) tend not to respond as well to paternalistic leadership as more traditional people (Chao et al., 2010).

From a postcolonial feminist perspective, the data show that female managers behave far from homogeneously when they are positioned within paternalistic leadership conceptualisation. Several strategies are utilised: sometimes mimicking the expected behaviour described in paternalistic leadership; sometimes Othering themselves to it, by mimicking the traditional female role in Chinese contexts. Ultimately, some of the women engage in forms of hybrid behaviour where they create their own identity. Although these identities are conditioned and

constrained by their social environment, female managers still exercise agency in how they fashion them. Evidence of this lies in the lack of a unified response to most questions; different women within the same organisation have different ways of seeing similar issues.

Overall, the choices and behaviours are deeply influenced by gender and the implications that being an ethnically Chinese, female manager has in Hong Kong, which is an unfortunate omission of the hegemonic conceptualisation in leadership, when viewing leadership in a culturally Chinese context only from a male perspective: an omission that this thesis has highlighted and explored.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Introduction

The current chapter summarises both the analysis and findings of this thesis, while outlining the main contribution this study makes to extant literature. The analysis and conclusion within this thesis should be considered within its context of an exploratory study using a single case study. As such, study findings cannot be decontextualized and/or generalised. The current research project has investigated how the Chinese version of the paternalistic theory of leadership, a male-biased theory of leadership, influences the expected traditional role of ethnically Chinese, female managers in a Hong Kong cultural setting. One reason for doing so is that current hegemonic conceptualisations of paternalistic leadership do not take into account women in managerial positions and their particular needs and interests. Consequently, the current thesis has taken steps to address addressed this knowledge gap by focusing on the issue of how ethnically Chinese, female leaders lead in Hong Kong and how they execute their leadership role within the current case study. This has been carried out drawing on paternalistic leadership and a feminist using postcolonial perspective, framed by a multilevel case study analysis that examines the influence of the Hong Kong Government, interested groups, the organisation, managers and their subordinates.

This chapter starts by summarising paternalistic leadership and its influence at each level of analysis of the case study, as paternalistic leadership is the dominant leadership conceptualisation in Chinese cultural contexts. It is clear that managers are under the influence of paternalistic leadership that is displayed by senior management in the organisation. Therefore, paternalistic leadership to a certain extent is used on and used by the ethnic Chinese female

managers. Following the focus on paternalistic leadership, the chapter is subdivided into subsections, each addressing a specific research question.

The first research question demands the consideration of further issues, such as: limitation of paternalistic leadership; emerging issues; factors from paternalistic leadership; basic paternalistic domains; organisational factors; socio-cultural factors; feminist postcolonial contributions; women as Other to men; and western influences, mimicry (Frenkel, 2008) and hybridity. In addressing the second research question, a model summarising the main actors of the present study is presented. Considering the third research question, this chapter examines gender equality before discussing the final research question by providing an analysis of the influences of the traditional role of women in Chinese cultural settings and its influence in the current study.

Based on the findings of the literature review, which established paternalistic leadership as the most developed and researched theoretical framework for conducting indigenous research on leadership in a Chinese cultural context (Chen and Farh, 2010; Wu and Xu, 2012), and that females have been largely ignored within the conceptualisations and its applied research, this thesis makes several contributions to the literature on leadership. First, by presenting a critical view of the current dominant conceptualisation on leadership in China, achieved by an analysis of the theory of paternalistic leadership from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Second, by presenting a new understanding of how ethnically Chinese, female managers lead in Hong Kong, incorporating both leadership issues and non-professional expectations and their effects on this group of managers within the current case study. Finally, establishing the way in which ethnically Chinese, female managers negotiate their professional and family lives in Hong Kong.

The section below starts by summarising the influences of paternalistic leadership at each level of analysis of the current case study.

Paternalistic leadership in the current case study

This section examines whether paternalistic leadership and its concepts are present at each level of analysis within the current case study. Overall, the present study shows and explores the limitation of paternalistic leadership as a conceptualisation to explain the leadership behaviours of ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong. This study has identified the influences of other factors overlooked paternalistic leadership; for instance, that of being a woman in a managerial position, in a Chinese cultural setting, as managers are influenced by external social expectations and self-imposed expectations dictating how women should behave. These expectations are quite often in direct contrast to the described behaviours presented in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. In addition, there are also other overlooked factors which are influential such as the government as an institutional actor and the actions taken by interest groups. Remarkably, within the current case study, several issues presented in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership in the literature review, such as the described subordinate behaviour (Chen and Farh, 2010), cannot be identified in the current case study, denoting social change and a need to update the understanding of how people lead in Chinese cultural contexts (Peus et al., 2014).

The prominence of paternalistic leadership is subsequently summarised at each level of analysis within the current case study. At the level of the interest groups such as The Women's Foundation, there are references towards paternalism. This does not mean that they might have

some paternalistic attitudes that were not identified. The actions of these groups are limited to the publications and dissemination of their agenda. Yet, within their actions they advocate for gender equality and therefore, challenge the values that underpin paternalistic leadership. At the institutional level, it is different as Confucian values are presented in official publications, trying to reinforce traditional values, and also trying to exert control over a supposedly independent commission, showing clear behaviour, identified in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, as having a tight control over everything at the organisational level. There are clear signs of paternalism such as the particular organisational arrangement, based on Eric's figures or the fact that being a member of Eric's extended family gives some employees an advantage. Some rituals such as the red envelopes are there to reinforce this paternalism. Managers, as presented in this thesis, are undoubtedly influenced by them and, in turn, display some behaviour that can be seen as part of the conceptualisation of paternalism leadership, but they also depart from this in certain aspects such as authoritarianism.

Based on this case study, paternalism trickles down from the institutional level to the organisational level, but at the managerial level, female managers choose to depart in a number of ways (for a detailed account of managerial behaviours see Chapter 6 of the analysis), as their subordinates do not show the described subordinate behaviours when in the presence of paternalistic leadership. Finally, subordinates present most distant behaviour when compared with the description within of paternalistic leadership, representing a clear departure from traditional values and even an acknowledgement of area where they know better than their managers. This is in agreement with the finding of Chao et al. (2010), who stated that lower levels of traditional values are linked to a less positive reaction to paternalistic leadership (for

more information, see section on traditional values in chapter 6). The following section addresses the first research questions.

Figure 14: Paternalistic leadership as represented at each level of analysis

Level of analysis	Phenomenon: Paternalistic leadership
Interest groups	Interest groups do not show any kind of paternalism; most of their actions are limited to the publication (such as the shadow reports) and dissemination of their agenda on gender equality. Yet, within their agenda, they challenge paternalistic attitudes.
Institutional level	The Hong Kong government replicates paternalistic attitudes, for instance, by the inclusion of Confucian values in their publications and the control of a commission that is supposedly independent.
Organisational level	The organisation displays a clear paternalistic trend in its rituals (red envelopes) and the way it conducts its HRM. This has a direct influence on its employees; yet it has also shown departure from paternalism.
Managerial level	Managers are aware of the organisational paternalism as it is clear that being a relative of Eric is an advantage, but they did not display the same level of paternalism with their own subordinates, as their behaviours depart from the described behaviours of a paternalistic leader.
Subordinate level	Subordinates are influenced by the organisational paternalism and by some paternalistic practices from their managers. However, they have not shown the described subordinate behaviour when in the presence of paternalism.

First research question:

How can the integration of paternalistic leadership and postcolonial feminism contribute to an understanding of how ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong negotiate their leadership role in Hong Kong? What are the limitations of paternalistic leadership from a postcolonial feminist perspective?

The Chinese version of paternalistic leadership theory became the point of departure for the analysis of the current case study. Based on the analysis, it is clear that paternalistic leadership is applied on the middle managers by the senior managers, but also implemented by the middle managers with their subordinates, however to a limited extent. Yet, from a post-colonial feminist perspective, it may be argued that paternalistic leadership as the dominant conceptualisation is not enough to understand fully the implications for the current case, where female managers are in leadership positions, as this is an exploratory single case study.

Limitation of paternalistic leadership

Paternalistic leadership as the dominant conceptualisation assumes that the leader is male. In addition, its conceptualisation is male gendered, conceptualising behaviours typically associated with masculinity and men (Westwood, 1992, 1997). As a consequence, the theory fails to acknowledge the social and cultural implications of being female in a Chinese cultural society. Yet, both the literature review and the data elucidate very different roles for men and women in these societies. The current work has presented how women struggle and the strategies that they have developed to fulfil two roles, the professional, where expectations are the same for males and females, and the social/cultural, where several roles and expectations as mothers/daughters/sisters/wives are to be achieved (Tang et al., 2010), whereas men are typically expected to perform their professional role. (For a detailed analysis of this, see section “Challenges that female managers face, at home and professionally”.)

This conflict between roles has been evidenced by data gathered at several levels; for instance, in the sections on the “Challenges that women managers face at home and professionally”, the managerial level elucidates how, in contrast to men, women have to fulfil these two roles. Men respond to dual roles potentially by hiring domestic help. Moreover, the

organisational level within the section on equality shows the organisation's assumption that if women are late to work, it is because of their family commitments but there is a lack of the same consideration where male employees are concerned (see section "Differences among genders"). Finally, at the institutional level, the spokeswoman from the EOC, Devi Novianti, highlights the differences in social expectations by advocating for more legislation regarding gender equality, by criticising established legislation for a lack of real social impact regarding equality issues, and also for perpetuating existing differences by granting considerably more paid maternity leave than paternity leave.

This last point was reinforced by the reports produced by the interest group (presented in the literature review of this thesis and discussed in the section "Working environment at an institutional level of this work"), which critiques the government for its lack of action and also suggests some measures such as empowering the women's commission to improve the situation of women in Hong Kong.

The paternalistic leadership theory is based on three main independent constructs: benevolence, morality, and authoritarianism (Wu and Xu, 2012). Yet, based on the data, managers display weak traits of the authoritarian construct, directly undermining one of the three pillars of the model, which could be linked to the fear of being perceived as less feminine, held by women in culturally Chinese societies, as established by Xian and Woodhams (2008). Consequently, presenting the traditional role of women in Chinese societies and the expectation that they should behave in a rather soft manner takes over the authoritarian dimension of paternalistic leadership, presenting a clear conflict between the traditional role of women in Chinese societies and the expected behaviour of paternalistic leadership. The current case study

presents managers as women who are less authoritarian, but who instead develop personal relationships with their subordinates, highlighting the importance of loyalty in a much more negotiated, accommodating and consultative managerial attitude within the current case study. This is in contrast to the loyalty described in the model of paternalistic leadership, i.e. a given loyalty to the leader just because the person was in a leadership position (Chen and Farh, 2010).

Moreover, a further limitation of paternalistic leadership addressed in the present study is the fact that paternalistic leadership does not account for the interaction and potential problems that might arise from the interaction of male subordinates and female managers. The data presented in the section “Challenges that women managers face, at home and professionally”, show that some female subordinates develop very close links with their female managers and also how male subordinates are uncomfortable being led by females. Therefore, occasionally, being female is a characteristic which undermines authority. These are some of the most significant findings of the present study, which also shows that some traditional Chinese ideas are still present and are relevant to the current case. In addition, this non-acceptance by some of the male subordinates towards having a female leader creates tensions and affects both work and personal relationships within the current case study.

Finally, it is also relevant to highlight that the model of paternalistic leadership is based on Chinese cultural roots, which are still relevant today, but which also do not reflect the social changes that a Chinese cultural society such as Hong Kong (and many others) have undertaken. Therefore, the model of leadership is based on a set of traditional cultural assumptions that are part of Chinese cultural societies from a historical perspective (Chen and Farh, 2010; Wu and Xu, 2012), but not so present in the current social dynamics. The analysis of the level of traditionality of Hong Kong from an institutional, organisational, and individual perspective suggests that

some traditional ideas are relevant, (for example, the respect for hierarchies), but others are not, (for example, the authoritarian dimension). This situation sometimes leads to confusion and contradiction, as is evident from the analysis the section on traditionality, where respondents present very different answers to questions that explore similar cultural features but are presented from different perspectives.

Emerging issues

This section focuses on the issues that have emerged in the current case study which have been overlooked in the past by the conceptualisation of paternalistic feminist leadership. Building on these limitations of paternalistic leadership, a postcolonial perspective aims to enrich the current picture by providing a voice and a woman's perspective to the phenomena observed.

As previously stated, the (level) data show that women in managerial positions are expected to fulfil two roles: the professional and the expected female social role, which are often in contradiction. Yet, due to its focus on males, paternalistic leadership does not acknowledge this role conflict. However, the postcolonial feminist perspective has aimed to give a voice to the female participants to enable them to present their perspectives, including accounts of how they manage to achieve both responsibilities. In addition, paternalistic leadership fails to fully acknowledge, even though it is present in the conceptualisation, the importance and complexity of loyalty within all ranks of the organisation, which is a clearly a new finding of this study. Specifically, the importance of family ties is completely lacking from the paternalistic leadership conceptualisation. Yet in the current study, the prominence of Eric's relatives' importance and influence within the organisation is clear.

In the current case study, bribery has emerged as a prominent concern in several ways (for a detailed account, see section “Bribery; The female advantage”): in the official company documents that the employees have to sign when joining the organisation; by the official documents that the employees have to send to suppliers every year before the festive season; by employing members of the extended family; and also in the loyalty section. Yet, this concern regarding corruption does not reflect the traditional roots of paternalistic leadership, where the importance of proper morality is presented (Chen and Farh, 2010) and bribery and corruption appear more complex than the model of paternalistic leadership acknowledges. This is a finding that presents a clear departure from the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. Furthermore, concerns centred on bribery provide a justification for constructing false gender differences within the organisation; due to social and cultural reasons, women were perceived to be more difficult to bribe than men. Irrespective of the truth behind these assumptions, it is evident that this led to male discrimination, where a bias towards women was manifested. This comes as a new perspective identified in this study which has not been addressed by paternalistic leadership, and that represents a possibility for further research.

Official company documents show that the company has diverging ways of operating: the official way, existing to create an image for potential customers, presented in the official documents; and the actual way, operating mostly regarding interpersonal relationships, customs and behaviours (for more details, see section “Official documents”). The data do not elucidate how this affects the ethnically Chinese, female managers in the current organisation, or if this is only present within this organisation, in organisations in Hong Kong that have to deal with foreign customers, or in every organisation in Hong Kong. However, based on Eric’s responses, it is clear that the organisation in this case study tends to be less organised than its western

counterparts. What it is clear is that the organisation has double standards: a handbook that is shown to its potential customers, whereby measures to make the organisation more female-friendly in the eyes of westerners is presented, in addition to the way in which the company is actually run.

The study has also examined how women use work to reduce domestic responsibility, for instance, by going to work on Saturdays when there is little work to do. This is traditionally something men have engaged in within the organisation; yet in this case, women have displayed this behaviour to escape the pressure of performing domestic duties, consequently adding a new dimension to this area of research. Finally, having a family-like environment is a prominent theme in the data, but the model of paternalistic leadership does not acknowledge this. Having a family-like environment potentially reinforces the extant idea of having a harmonious working environment, but it also provides an extra level of employee commitment, a commitment not just to work in harmony, but also to establish (close) family-like relationships.

Factors from paternalistic leadership

Having reviewed the factors emerging from the data which lack representation in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, the factors relevant to the data and present in the model of paternalistic leadership are subsequently considered.

Basic paternalistic domains

As presented in the literature review, the model of paternalistic leadership is based on three main independent constructs (Farh et al., 2008), moral, authoritarian, and benevolent. Based on the current study, it can be concluded, as a finding of the current study, that the three domains are less prominent than presented in the literature and remarkably, the authoritarian construct is almost irrelevant for the ethnically Chinese, female managers in this Hong Kong

case study organisation. Nevertheless, the other two domains, moral and benevolent, remain applicable. (For a detailed account of these issues and relevant data, see Chapter 6.)

Organisational factors

The organisational factors of the model of paternalist leadership are present in the data, which reinforce the relevance of the case study organisation. These factors are, family ownership, whereby the owner of the organisation is Eric, having started the company under the encouragement of his father, and who now hopes for his own son to inherit the company in the future. Within the organisation ownership and top management are united, as Eric is both the owner and senior manager. Regarding the entrepreneurial structure, the organisation is subdivided into smaller groups dedicated to a specific range of products, finding customers and suppliers for their products. For the task environment and technology, in the current case, the task is to be an intermediary between Chinese factories and mostly western customers.

Socio/cultural factors

The first factor is Familism, which is prominent within the case study, where managers develop the idea of familism through interactions within their working team. In addition, at an organisational level, the idea of familism is manifested in the section on the level of the traditionality of the organisation. The expected respect for hierarchy is also applicable as it is present within the organisation, evidenced by everyone largely knowing their place. Personalism/particularism is also evident as elucidated in the loyalty section, which shows how personal relationships play a role, as do family connections. In addition to these factors, various traditional Chinese factors forming the cultural roots of paternalistic leadership have also been identified such as the norm of reciprocity (bao), kindness, and leadership by virtue. Building on

the conclusion of this research question, the following section will address the second research question.

Feminist postcolonial contribution

Based on the rich description of the women in managerial positions presented in the current thesis, it becomes clear that the use of a postcolonial feminist approach has been successful. The women in the current case study deserve to be considered on their own terms and not within an arguable biased western feminist framework, which has a history of viewing all women as a monolithic category and non-western women in potentially derogatory terms (Mohanty, 1984). Regarding the postcolonial feminist issue of how women are Othered, within this multilevel conclusion, it is clear that the interest group members strive for gender equality, therefore not seeing women as Other to men but as equals. Yet, for the Hong Kong government, women are in some instances seen as similar to men and sometimes as Other to men. An example of the first case is in the production of the booklet, “Equal pay for equal work”, in which women are not Othered by the government but seen as equals and should be remunerated in the same way. At the organisational level, the company presents an image where it is willing to comply with the government legislation. Yet, it has some organisational arrangements where women are clearly Othered to men as in its approach to bribery, where women are constructed as fundamentally different to men and therefore cannot be bribed using traditional customs.

At the managerial level, women are aware that the organisation sees them as Other to men, as it is clear how flexible the organisation is regarding family circumstances. However, it is also clear how women engage in Othering themselves by accepting this place as normal, a place where they have to fulfil multiple expectations as team leaders as well as members of a family. Interestingly, they also do not appear to question their husband’s place in the family and the fact

that they have more family responsibilities than them. Based on the female managers' interviews, (presented and analysed in the section "Challenges that female managers face, at home and professionally" of the analysis), husbands may heap more pressure onto their wives, as the ones who are supposed to take care of the domestic duties, regardless of their professional demands and responsibilities. Therefore, husbands may have an inadvertent role in reinforcing this gendered dynamics, consequently leaving women with a 'double working day '. However, further research is needed in this area, which should include also data collected from the husbands. Some subordinates clearly see their female managers as Other, manifested when they gossip about their personal circumstances and re-emphasising their identities in terms of traditional, domestic based femininities. However, it is not the case for all subordinates; an alternative group of subordinates have at least given clues to this behaviour.

Figure 15: Women as Other to men as represented at each level of analysis

Level of analysis	Phenomenon: Women as Other to men
Interest groups	Strive for gender equality; therefore, there is no Othering.
Institutional level	Strive for gender equality on paper, for instance, with its equality legislation; in reality, it stresses and replicates some gender binaries Othering women
Organisational level	Strive for gender equality on paper, as stated in the interviews; in reality, it stresses and replicates some gender binaries, as with the idea that women cannot be bribed.
Managerial level	Are perceived as Other to men, because they have to fulfil both professional and domestic duties, unsupportive husbands might not acknowledge the double shift of labour performed by women and the stress this may cause to their wives.
Subordinate level	Some male subordinates see their female managers; for instance, when male subordinates gossip about their managers' marital status; Some other subordinates do not.

Western influence, and mimicry and hybridity

The interest groups analysed for this case organised and acted according to a western form of action, showing a level of western influence that may suggest hybridisation. This group appears to be mostly modelled on western groups, using liberal strategies to create awareness regarding gender inequality issues in Hong Kong (Lorber, 2011). In contrast, the Hong Kong government has a much more hybrid approach, as has been presented in this thesis. Most of the legislation on gender has been copied from western countries and has very limited cultural adaptation, as argued by Wing-yee Lee (1996) and Loper (2012). Yet the legislation has a rather weak implementation, as argued by the spokeswoman of the EOC (discussed in the section “Working environment at an institutional level” of this work), with its actual implementation being left to local business, creating a hybrid form of foreign legislation with local implementation (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008).

The organisation complies with the legislation but it also implements its own Chinese ways of doing HRM, utilising mostly informal norms of, for instance, being flexible towards females because of family reasons. However, as the organisation also deals directly with western clients, it is also influenced by them, an example being the *Employees’ Handbook* of the organisation, analysed in the section “Official documents” of this work, consequently mixing and adapting itself to both western and culturally Chinese customs. Managers are clearly influenced by the institutional and organisational hybridity; for instance, they are affected by the weak implementation of the gender legislation by both the government and the organisation, and they also show their own way of hybridising as they are influenced by the requirements and expectations of their western clients. Subordinates have presented the most divergent behaviour

to what is expected by not really showing traditional Chinese behaviour at all, as presented in Chapter 6. The following section addresses the second research question.

Figure 16: Western influence, and mimicry and hybridity, as represented at each level of analysis

Level of analysis	Phenomenon: Western influence, mimicry and hybridity
Interest groups	Interest groups organised themselves as in the West, writing shadow reports and applying western pressure.
Institutional level	Some equality legislation was copied from western countries; yet, its application is left to local businesses.
Organisational level	Organisation has two concerns: to deal with western customers and be more western friendly, and to deal with local employees and be closer to Chinese culture. Both influences are present in the organisation creating hybrid work environments and practices.
Managerial level	Managers' behaviour is mostly limited to the two dominant conceptualisations: the traditional role of women in Chinese culture and the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. Yet western influences were also present as they are influenced by the requirements and expectations of their western clients.
Subordinate level	Their behaviour was the one that most departed from the expected subordinate behaviour of paternalistic leadership.

Second research question:

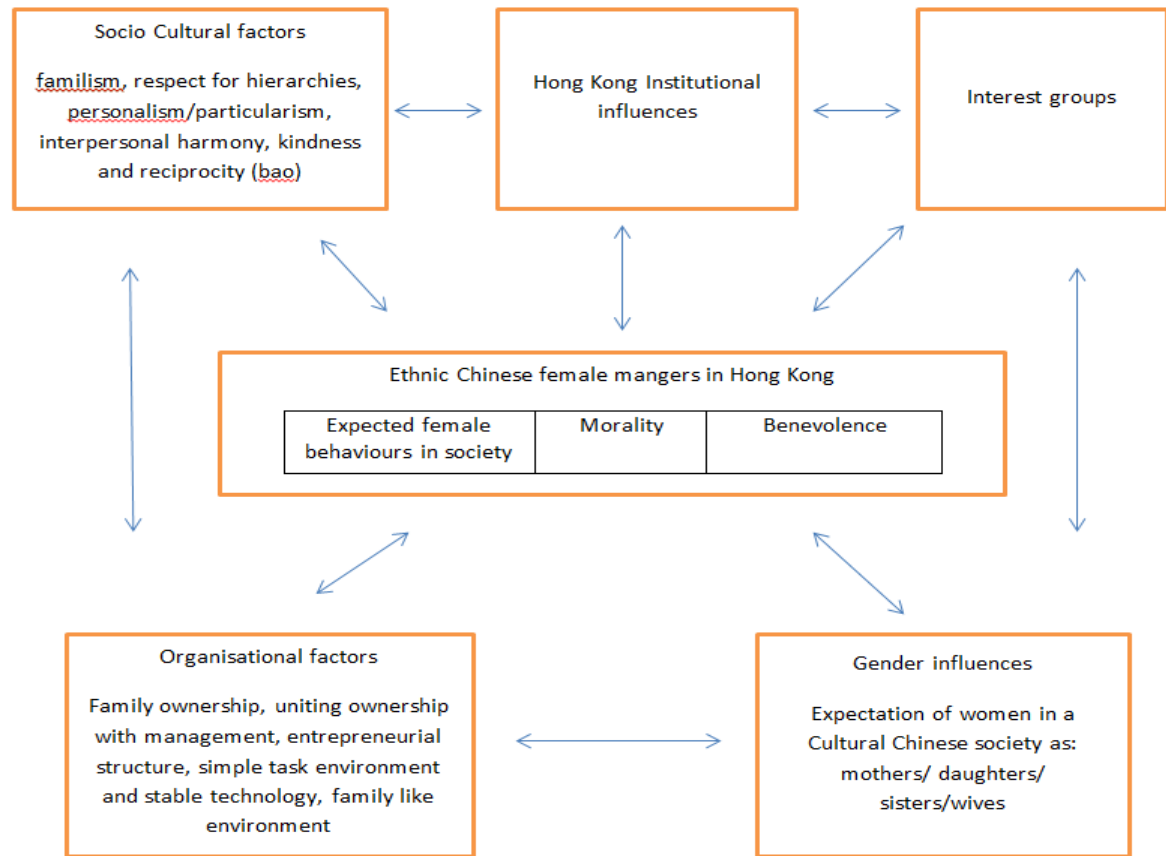
How do paternalistic leadership and postcolonial feminism contribute to an understanding of ethnic Chinese female managers' leadership behaviour in Hong Kong?

As presented in the previous section, the current study and the postcolonial approach has demonstrated some factors within the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership as irrelevant

for ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong. However, other factors have been found in this study and remain prominent in the data. In addition, a series of factors emerging from the data but lacking in acknowledgement by paternalistic leadership have been exposed, such as the influence of expected social female behaviours or the influence of institutional factors. Building on these findings, the following section aims at presenting a conceptualisation which combines these three elements and which can be used to explain the ethnically Chinese, female managers' leadership behaviour in Hong Kong.

The figure presented below is part of the findings of the research, summarising part of the contribution of the current study, and whilst models have been described as essentialising (Westwood, 2004); they undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding. The model below aims at providing a better understanding of the phenomena by presenting a graphic summary of them. However, this model should not be misunderstood, or generalised to other contexts, as it only represents the findings within the current case study.

Figure 17: Towards a model of Chinese female leadership in Hong Kong



Source: Own elaboration

The model presented above utilises in the model of paternalistic leadership (presented and analysed in the literature review) as a point of departure. Yet, elements of paternalistic leadership the findings of this study are included, formed by five main areas that have emerged; organisational factors, socio/cultural factors from the model of paternalistic leadership, institutional influences, gender influences, and interest groups. At the centre of the model are the behaviours of the managers; all of the elements are connected by corresponding arrows, implying that the five areas mutually influence each other. From left to right the model depicts

organisational factors, including: family ownership, uniting of ownership with a management entrepreneurial structure, simple task environment, stable technology, and family-like environment; and socio/cultural factors: familism, respect for hierarchy, personalism/particularism, interpersonal harmony kindness and reciprocity. These factors originated in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership and are presented as they were found in the current study.

Factors included in the model that have emerged from the current study include, a series of factors called gender influences (depicted in the box at the bottom right), which acknowledges the external social influences that women in Chinese society receive as mothers/daughters/sisters/wives. Then the Hong Kong institutional influences are also added to depict the influence of governmental institutional policies on the role of women in Hong Kong. The impact of the institutional influence is felt by females as managers and also by females in their more traditional role, as has been presented in the analysis section of this study. Yet again, it is understood that all the actors in the current model mutually influence each other.

At the centre of the model there is a box that presents the leadership behaviour of female managers identified in this study. This box includes two of the three dimensions previously identified in the model of paternalistic leadership, morality and benevolence, which have been identified in the current study. In addition, a gender dimension has been added, based on the data, which represent the way in which each of the managers personally react to the external expectations and obligations of being a woman in contemporary Hong Kong, and how their agency in this area influences leadership behaviours. Furthermore, the authoritarian dimension

has been eliminated from the model because no strong evidence of its presence was found in the current study.

Lastly, and a specific finding of the current study, the lack of evidence to support the expected subordinate behaviours delineated in the model of paternalistic leadership has led to their exclusion in the conceptualisation above. During the analysis of the interviews, it emerged that the participants did not display the expected subordinated behaviours of indebtedness and obligation to repay, identification and modelling, and compliance and dependency, when in the presence of paternalistic leadership, as described by the model of paternalistic leadership (presented and discussed in the last chapter of the analyses section).

On the one hand, the lack of this expected behaviour could be explained by the fact that the managers did not fulfil the entire behaviours presented in paternalistic leadership; for instance, the authoritarian dimension was missing; but it could also be argued that subordinates possess fewer traditional Chinese values and are therefore less prone to react positively to paternalistic leadership in agreement with the findings of Chao et al. (2010), presented in the literature review. On the other hand, the participants tended to show behaviour suggesting agreement with the idea of personal relationships between leader and her close collaborators, and loyalty towards the leader. This potentially presents an opportunity and justification for conducting research focusing on more relationship based theories of leadership, in the current context, and also highlights a necessity for further research to focus on subordinate behaviour in general. Finally, these findings should be considered within their context: an exploratory study using a single case study which cannot be generalised. The next section addresses the third research questions of this study.

Third research question:

In what ways do institutional and organisational factors drive and constrain the managerial role of ethnically Chinese, female managers in Hong Kong?

Through the use of legislation, the government's desire to appear to tackle gender inequality is clear from both the literature and the data concerning institutional factors. Yet, the government has also been criticised for not doing enough, with evidence emerging from the literature, and several interest groups reports, and also highlighted by the spokeswoman of the EOC, Devi Novianti (for a detailed account, see section "Working environment at an institutional level"). The government's actions appear to reflect those of the organisation.

The organisation has a set of formal documents merely to create a positive external image to potential customers; and the government also seems to have a formal set of legislation as an attempt to strive for gender equality but in reality, this legislation and the institutions that have been created (such as the EOC) have very limited power. Arguably, in the same way, the organisation has an Employee Handbook to look good to potential customers. The Hong Kong government may want to have gender equality legislation to improve its international reputation, and to be seen by its own citizens as active in the social equality arena.

The current government does not use the entire set of resources at its disposal to better the lives of female managers, which affects the role of women in managerial positions (in addition to potentially that of all the working women in Hong Kong), as has been argued by the interest groups in their shadow reports and discussed in the "Working environment at an institutional level" section of this thesis. Therefore one outcome of this is that the traditional role of women in Chinese societies is reinforced. The Labour Department's attempts at promoting

Confucian values (as a way to be seen to strive for social harmony) further evidences this divergence between policy and practice, as implementation is left to the discretion of those concerned and therefore, its impact could be described as purely symbolic, as argued by as Wing-yee Lee (1996) and Loper (2012) and discussed in the “Working environment at an institutional level” section of this thesis.

In addition, the literature has shown the government to hold and impose a very Confucian view of society, potentially reinforcing the traditional role of women in Chinese societies, a role that does not expect women to be leaders in the workplace. Evidence of this can be seen in the amount of maternity leave given to women which is disproportionate to the paternity leave given to men or the overrepresentation of men in the governmental workforce more generally. This situation and the gendered differences reproduce by the Hong Kong government, replicate structural, gendered inequalities which are also unchallenged (Lewis and Humbert, 2010). Based on the evidence collected in the current study, it could be concluded that the organisational factors reinforce the paternalistic aspects of the organisation.

Gender Equality

From this multilevel analysis, interest groups pressure the government not only to create legislation leading to a more gender equal society, but also to take concrete action that goes beyond the enactment of legislation. The Hong Kong government passes legislation to address gender imbalances (as discussed in the section “Anti-discrimination legislation” of the literature review). However, these laws and their implementation have been critiqued as superficial, falling short of what the interest groups are expecting (Wing-yee Lee, 1996; Loper, 2012). On the one hand, the organisation in this case study aims to comply with the government legislation, and in some cases even exceeds it, as with the extra days for paternity leave. Yet, on the other hand, the

organisation has to manage the pressure of different stakeholders, not only the pressure from the government, but also the expectations of its mostly western clients, and its employees, in addition to its own needs.

Consequently, it establishes unofficial but accepted business practices, replicating gender binaries and reinforcing gender differences between men and women, as illustrated in the analysis section of the thesis. An example of this is the organisation turning a blind eye towards female managers who arrive late to work. Female managers have to negotiate their social role not only as women in a cultural Chinese society, but also as team leaders within the organisation. This must balance the expectations of the organisation, such as good performance, alongside the expectations of their family, a balance that sometimes presents contradictions. Yet, at no point in this research have women or the organisation employing them, questioned this status quo, which leaves them on the negative side of gender inequality. Finally, as a new finding of this study, the subordinates' gender influences their relationship with their managers, as some females are able to develop close ties with their managers and some men gossip about their managers behind their backs. These issues present constructed gender differences regarding the way in which they relate to their managers. This has a direct impact on the way female managers lead and relate with their subordinates and co-workers. The following section will focus on providing an answer to the final research question.

Figure 18: Gender equality as represented at each level of analysis

Level of analysis	Phenomenon: Gender equality
Interest groups	Pressure on the government to take more concrete action.
Institutional level	Actions taken by the government, as in the equality legislation, but with limited real impact as argued in the literature review.
Organisational level	Officially there is equality; in reality gender, inequalities exist. For instance, the belief that women are more difficult to bribe.
Managerial level	Managers have to negotiate the competing demands, of two roles as members of a family and as professionals, consequently, creating a 'double working day' for female managers
Subordinate level	Some male subordinates are not happy to have female managers; some female subordinates develop very close ties with their female managers. This presents a clear departure from paternalistic leadership, showing how managers are affected in their relationships by the gender of their subordinates.

Fourth research question:

How do cultural and social factors impel and inhibit the managerial role of ethnic Chinese female managers in Hong Kong?

Several cultural factors have been analysed, including: traditional Chinese values, the values presented in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership; western influences; and the relatively new professional expectations. The current case study has made the balancing act developed by the female managers, who are striving to fulfil both the expectations of men from a traditional perspective and professional expectations inherent in managerial positions, prominent. From one perspective, this fits the description presented by Northhouse (2012) of a 'superwoman', who excels in both her professional and personal domains.

The data show traditional values to be relevant to the female participants. Education, employment, and managerial positions are yet to eclipse the need for these women to marry and have children. In addition, women are still expected to lead the domestic chores, even if they have paid employment outside the home. Whilst foreign domestic helpers have helped these women to delegate part of their responsibilities to an extent, the ultimate responsibility resides with the managers who also become ‘managers’ within their homes, overseeing the work of the domestic helpers and managing that employment relationship.

Traditional role of women in Chinese cultural settings

Interest groups advocate a divergence from traditional roles, championing a more gender egalitarian society, leaving behind traditional expectations of how women should behave in a Chinese cultural society. However, the Hong Kong government has a different attitude, sending a mixed message, as when it enacts legislation to promote gender equality, but does not really enforce it. Yet, even within the legislation, gender binaries are replicated when women receive more days for maternity leave than men for paternity leave (Lewis and Humbert, 2010). As Guerrina (2001) argues, assumptions about gender roles are central to maternity legislation; in this case, legislation constructs women as mothers and limits the practical ability of men to be fathers, as it clearly views them as breadwinners who do not need time off when their children are born. The organisation also presents a mixed approach.

On the one hand, females have to be team leaders and therefore, they are expected to depart from their traditional roles as subordinates and second to men (Xian and Woodhams, 2008). And yet, the organisation validates the traditional role when it comes to family responsibilities by turning a blind eye, giving female managers more flexibility. Consequently,

as argued by Gregory and Milner (2009: 5), these types of selective flexibility at work “tend to reinforce the traditional separation of gender roles, leading to a polarization between the working experiences of men and women”. Managers cannot escape the influence of the institutions and the organisations; yet within their own agency, they also try to conform to and fulfil both roles to the best of their ability, as professionals and as traditional members of a family which, in turn, increases pressure and stress on them. Finally, male subordinates sometimes use the traditional Chinese expectations towards women as a tool to undermine female managerial ability. This is explicit in the dissemination of criticism towards single, female managers who are over 30 years of age.

Figure 19: Traditional role of women in Chinese cultural settings

Level of analysis	Phenomenon: Traditional role of women in Chinese cultural settings
Interest groups	These groups do not acknowledge in any way the traditional roles or values of women in Chinese societies; their actions are directed towards achieving gender equality that does not recognise any cultural traditional difference (as can be seen by the demands present in their shadow reports).
Institutional level	The government has a mixed approach. It passes legislation aimed at achieving gender equality, but it also reinforces the traditional role of women in society by failing to implement this legislation; legislation reinforces the traditional role, such as more days off for maternity than paternity leave.
Organisational level	The organisation, on the one hand, needs women to lead teams, which contradicts their traditional roles; but on the other hand, it supports and reinforces their traditional roles by showing extra flexibility regarding the managers' domestic responsibilities.
Managerial level	Managers are influenced by the institutional and organisational arrangement and the data show how they try to arrange their behaviour to accommodate their professional expectations without affecting the traditional expectations too much, for instance, by leaving the office as soon as possible to dedicate time to their family chores.
Subordinate level	Some male subordinates use the expectation towards women in traditional societies as a way to try to undermine them, as when subordinates gossip about their marital status.

The previous section analysed the collected data of this study, focussing on answering the research questions. The following section discusses the limitations, implications and areas for further research of this study.

Limitations

Language

Even though all participants were fluent in the English Language, it has to be acknowledged that Cantonese is their first language. Due to this, it is not possible to rule out some inaccuracies at the time of expressing themselves in English or misinterpretations of the questions asked by the researchers. However, as presented by Welch and Piekkari (2007), there is no clear agreement among scholars regarding an advantage in the use of the interviewees' native language. There are even some researchers who postulate an "outsider's advantage" when a non-native language is used (Andrews, 1995).

Literature review

Peng et al., (2001) have acknowledged that conducting a review of the literature that only includes publications in the English language creates a barrier to the study of cultures and social phenomena. Influential publications such as *Management Review* or *Management World* from Mainland China, or the *Journal of Management & Systems* from Taiwan, all of which are only published in the Chinese language, have not been taken into account, thereby excluding potential relevant knowledge to this study. However, as with any research project, limits have to be set to frame the study. From a postcolonial perspective, the transfer of knowledge globally begs for good translation services and technology may provide this in the near future.

Cultural bias

Although the current research has been designed to reduce potential bias by drawing on several sources of data at multiple levels (Antonakis et al., 2004), cultural bias is more complex to eradicate. Even though the researcher of this study has lived and was formally educated in

China and Hong Kong, cultural bias and misinterpretations in the analysis cannot be totally ruled out. This is due to the fact that the researcher, despite a great effort to learn and understand the culture, is still an outsider to the Hong Kong Chinese culture (Cui, 2015). Sometimes, participants often used phrases such as “*it is a Chinese thing*” to avoid further explanation of a specific issue that they did not want to address. Yet a Chinese person would not say this to another Chinese person. However, in other circumstances, participants used phrases such as “*let me explain to you because you are not Chinese*” to further contextualise their answers. Based on this limitation and to enrich the collected data, a local collaborator was also used for the data collection with the aim of reducing the cultural gap between the researcher and the participants. The local collaborator participated only in the initial stages of the analysis of the data, therefore helping to triangulate the collected data, and, later declined further involvement in the data analysis process due to other commitments. Inexorably, there is an element of cultural bias in any cross cultural study that not even a local collaborator can eradicate. As argued by Katyal and King (2014: 59), insiders do not “necessarily add strength and authority to a researcher’s cultural cognition” as they might overlook certain local phenomena.

Wider implications

Overall, this study suggests that the ethnic Chinese female managers in the present case study do not always subscribe to the described leadership style presented in the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership. Consequently, the female managers create a new, hybrid way to lead their subordinates. In addition, the gendered social expectations and their influence on the research participants have been highlighted.

As mentioned earlier this study makes several contributions first, by presenting a critical view of the current dominant discourse on leadership in China, achieved by an analysis of the

theory of paternalistic leadership from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Second, by presenting a new understanding of how ethnically Chinese, female managers lead in Hong Kong, incorporating both leadership issues and non-professional expectations and their effects on this group of managers within the current case study. Finally, by establishing the way in which ethnically Chinese, female managers negotiate their professional and family lives in Hong Kong. In addition to the contributions made by the study, there are several implications for each of the different levels of analysis. At the managerial level, it is clear that paternalistic leadership as a conceptualisation is not sufficient to fully understand ethnic Chinese female managers in Hong Kong. Therefore, when analysing ethnic Chinese female leadership behaviours, a wider set of social and gendered factors should also be included. An analysis taking these wider factors into account is central to any understanding of women in leadership positions. Regarding the organisational level, the gendered differences that the organisation makes among its employees must be acknowledged. These differences have been analysed in the current study, and it is clear that they (re)produce gender binaries, presenting constructed gender differences and affecting the professional performance and development of some of its employees. Consequently, the organisation should take measures in order to reorganise the job roles and responsibilities of its employees, and deconstruct the rigid gendered distinctions that it currently makes.

Finally, at the institutional level (as presented in the analysis section), even though the government has taken steps in order to decrease gender differences and strive for gender equality these steps are not enough and more concrete measures should be taken. This is imperative if the government is to stop (re)producing gender binaries where gender roles are predefined. At this stage the Hong Kong government risks, by not taking more concrete actions, the possibility of limiting the professional development of half of its working population.

Areas for further research

Within this doctoral thesis, several areas have been identified that require further research. The government effort aimed at providing women in Hong Kong with a more female-friendly work environment demands further research to assess its impact. The current case study shows how women have doubled their work in recent years; whilst household chores remain women's responsibility, their professional responsibilities have increased. Based on these findings, further research could focus on why this has been the case. In addition, as highlighted by Thein et al. (2010) and corroborated here, the divisions between private and professional responsibilities remain unclear, demanding further research to establish how much a subordinate should help his/her managers and when this actually constitutes abuse.

Within the analysis of the conceptualisation of paternalistic leadership, it is clear that further research on revenge taking in Chinese societies in organisational settings is needed. This is not only clear from the current case study, but also from the literature (Smith, 2012). Considering the findings of the current research project, as female managers do not display authoritarian behaviour as described by the model of paternalistic leadership, it would be important to establish whether there is a gender difference in the prominence and way that revenge is taken in the current cultural context to understand organisational dynamics better.

In addition, most of the research on counterproductive work behaviour in the Chinese cultural setting has been linked to top-down hierarchical relationships and abusive supervision; yet, as this study has presented, not all the conflicts in organisations are top-down hierarchical; some are intra group. Further research is needed to establish the role of gender in

counterproductive work behaviour originating from conflicts among people of the same hierarchical level.

Some of the findings of this study, especially those regarding domestic responsibilities of the female managers, are similar to the findings of Wajcman (2013) from a non-culturally Chinese setting; further research could focus on their application and relevance to other cultural contexts. Moreover, as women take care of their professional careers and also their traditional family responsibilities, it is clear from this study that men, and possibly specifically the husbands of the managers, are gender-blind towards women and their new double role. At this stage, it is only possible to speculate why this is the case, but further research could focus on an analysis of the male role in perpetuating a female 'double working day'. Furthermore, Lee (2003) states that women in Chinese cultural societies do not feel oppressed by their social role and responsibilities and it is not clear if this is the case or whether they accept the situation because they feel unable to change it.

Finally, the fact that the EOC booklet has been published in several languages and targeted at female migrant workers would seem to indicate that female foreign migrant workers are the most disadvantaged. The singularities of the gender pay gap and differences between foreign and local ethnically Chinese women are beyond the scope of this research project, yet further research could focus on this specific social issue.

Appendices

Appendix A

Biographical information

Biographical information from the mid managers people interviewed for the current project

Name	Selma
Working experience	22
Yeas in current position	5
Current position	Textiles General manager
Number of people managed	7
Male subordinate interviewed	Jerry
Female subordinate interviewed	Amanda

Name	Elizabeth
Working experience	28
Yeas in current position	15
Current position	Furniture General Manager
Number of people managed	6
Male subordinate interviewed	Kevin
Female subordinate interviewed	Lisa

Name	Winnie
Working experience	10
Years in current position	3
Current position	Business developer (schools uniforms)
Number of people managed	9
Male subordinate interviewed	Brandon
Female subordinate interviewed	Rosa

Name	Samantha
Working experience	9
Years in current position	3
Current position	Business developer (kitchenware)
Number of people managed	10
Male subordinate interviewed	Robert
Female subordinate interviewed	Stella

Name	Phoebe
Working experience	16
Years in current position	5
Current position	Business developer (female Spots cloths)
Number of people managed	10
Male subordinate interviewed	Michael
Female subordinate interviewed	Olivia

Name	Helen
Working experience	15
Yeas in current position	5
Current position	Business developer (Male underwear)
Number of people managed	12
Male subordinate interviewed	Justin
Female subordinate interviewed	Rachel

Name	Man
Working experience	14
Yeas in current position	6
Current position	Business developer (female shoes)
Number of people managed	12
Male subordinate interviewed	Rayan
Female subordinate interviewed	Megan

Name	Christy
Working experience	9
Yeas in current position	1
Current position	Business developer (female swimming suits)
Number of people managed	5
Male subordinate interviewed	Paul
Female subordinate interviewed	Lila

Name	Laura
Working experience	11
Yeas in current position	4
Current position	Business developer (female underwear)
Number of people managed	8
Male subordinate interviewed	William
Female subordinate interviewed	Virginia

Name	Maria
Working experience	15
Yeas in current position	8
Current position	Logistics manager
Number of people managed	12
Male subordinate interviewed	Kevin
Female subordinate interviewed	Madison

Name	Mandy
Working experience	8
Yeas in current position	3
Current position	Business developer (Gardening)
Number of people managed	5
Male subordinate interviewed	Tom
Female subordinate interviewed	Claire

Name	Tina
Working experience	16
Yeas in current position	6
Current position	Business developer (toys)
Number of people managed	10
Male subordinate interviewed	John
Female subordinate interviewed	Sofia

Name	Sarah
Working experience	15
Yeas in current position	9
Current position	Senior accountant
Number of people managed	8
Male subordinate interviewed	Peter
Female subordinate interviewed	Amy

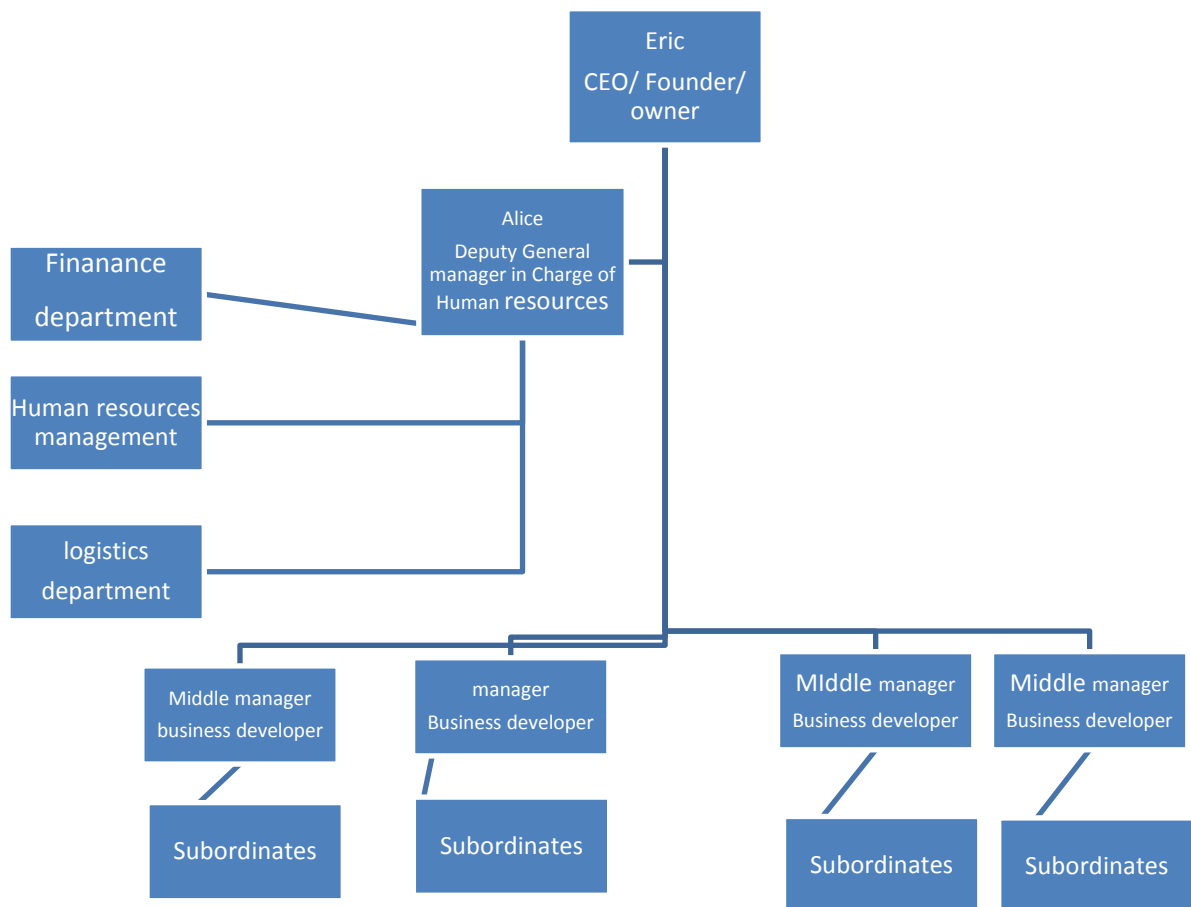
Name	Cindy
Working experience	15
Yeas in current position	8
Current position	Finance Manager
Number of people managed	8
Male subordinate interviewed	Mark
Female subordinate interviewed	Marta

Name	Vivien
Working experience	12
Years in current position	6
Current position	Business developer (working uniforms)
Number of people managed	5
Male subordinate interviewed	Max
Female subordinate interviewed	Ana

Appendix B

Organisational chart

The current organisation has a rather flat structure, Eric the general manager and owner is at the top of the organisation; Alice, his deputy is next in the line of command. After these positions the organisation is mostly organised around functional teams with a team leader, a middle manager formally known as business developer, and a group of subordinates. The chart below exemplifies part of the organisation presenting the aforementioned senior management and four example functional teams with a middle manager and their subordinates.



Appendix C

Questions for the first and second rounds of interviews

This appendix is composed on the questions asked in the first and second rounds of interviews

Interview Guide mid manager level

Introduction

Name?

years you have been working?

how long have you been in your current post?

are you married?

do you have kids?

were you born in HK?

have you ever lived / work outside Hong Kong?

Can you give me an overview of your job and the company you work for?

is the company you work for a family business?

Paternalistic leadership

Do you have to have the last word in a meeting with your subordinates?

Do you take all the decision on your department, even the small ones?

Do exercise strict discipline over your subordinates?

Do you tell off your employees when the works does not get done?

Authoritative:

Do you have to have the last word in a meeting with your subordinates?

Do you take all the decision on your department, even the small ones?

Do exercise strict discipline over you subordinates?

Do you tell off your employees when the works does not get done?

Benevolent:

Do you take a good care of your subordinate's personal life?

Do you behave in a family fashion when interaction with your subordinates?

Do you have a special care for the subordinate who have work for you the longest?

Do you try understanding what the problems of your subordinates are when they are not performing well?

Moral:

Moral dimension:

Do you use your employees for personal gain?

Do you take personal credit for the achievement of the team?

Do you get back to people who have offended you for the collective interest?

Do you use Guanxi to obtain personal gains?

Subordinate response:

Identification and imitation:

do you think that your subordinate admire you?

do you think that your subordinates tell their colleagues about your merits?

Do you think that your subordinate is taking on your values?

Do you think that your subordinates identified with your philosophy and methods of work?

Do your subordinates always agree with your views and opinions?

Do you think that your subordinates think that you have a good evaluation of the future?

Do you think that your subordinates think that you are always right about your decisions?

Compliance without decent

Do your subordinates completely obey your instructions?

even if they do not agree with them?

do your subordinates abide your philosophy and methods to work?

when there is a new implementation, do your subordinates follow your methodology of work?

do your subordinates conform to your commands unconditionally?

Gratitude and repayment

when they get the opportunity, will your subordinates repay your kindness?

do your subordinates appreciate your kindness?

would your subordinates work for you, even sacrificing their own interest?

Would your subordinates take responsibility for what you have done wrong?

would your subordinates help you with your private business?

Traditionality (Farh et al 1997)

When people are in dispute, they should ask the most senior person to decide who is right

Children should respect to those people who are respected by their parents

The best way to avoid mistakes is to follow the instructions of a Senior person

before marriage a woman should subordinate herself to her father, after marriage to her husband

the Chief government official is like the head of a household, the citizens should obey his decisions on all state matter

Confusions

儒家

how relevant do you think that are today the 5 cardinal relationships?

Ruler to Ruled

Father to Son

Husband to Wife

Elder Brother to Younger Brother

Friend to Friend

Gender as a stressor

Perceived work demands (Choi and Chen 2006)

Are you given too much work to do?

Do you have too many responsibilities?

Do you have reasonable work demands?

Perceived family demands (Choi and Chen 2006)

Do you spend too much energy of your family responsibilities?

Do you spend too much time on family responsibilities?

Do your family responsibilities make you tired?

Extras

Do you think that you have higher demands at work than men?

Do you think that you have higher demands at home than your males relatives/ your partner?

Female issues

Do you perceive that ladies has more demands that men in today's world?

Do your find your work responsibilities and family responsibilities incompatible?

Do you feel discriminated because you are a lady?

Do you think your subordinates respect you more or less because you are a lady?

Do you have to work harder because you are a lady?

Stress

Is being a lady in man's world a source of Stress?

Which one is a bigger source or stresses your work or family responsibilities?

Do you think is it is the same case in other countries/ societies? Why? Why not?

Do you think that being a woman is a problem at the time of looking for a promotion to higher position?

How do you manage the expectation of being a woman in Chinese society with your work?

Do you have to pay a social price for having a career?

Do your parents support you on your decision to work outside your home?

Would it be a problem if you would earn more money than your partner?

Senor Manager's level

Questions

- 1 Does the company make any distinction between its male and female managers?
- 2 How does the company ensure gender equality among its employees?
- 3 Is your company supportive of the non-work responsibilities that female managers have?
- 4 (If the above is true) how does this support affect the leadership function of female managers?
- 5 What are the criteria for hiring new staff in the company? Does gender plays a role?
- 6 What are the criteria for promotions in the company? Does gender plays a role?
- 7 How does the company ensure a high level of work commitment among its employees? Are there any gender differences?
- 8 How does the company train and develop its employees?
- 9 Are there any gender differences in the training process and its outcomes? Why/ why not?
- 10 Are there any differences in the efficiency among gender?
- 11 (If the above is true), what are these differences?
- 12 How does the company ensure that both males and females salaries are equal?
- 13 How does the company set goals and evaluate the performance of its employees?
- 14 In these evaluations are there any gender differences?

Paternalistic leadership related questions

- 1 Does the company aim to have a family like environment?
- 2 (If the above is true) why?
- 3 (If the above is true) how does the company achieve this?
- 4 How traditionally Chinese is the company?
- 5 How much is the company influenced by the West (western business practices) in its operations?
- 6 How important are hierarchies in the organization? Why/ why not?
- 7 How important is the idea of having a harmonic working environment?

Questions Inspired by the literature review

- 1 Does the company perceive a gender based difference in the level of stress of its employees?
- 2 What are the sources of stress for your male and female managers?

Official company documents

Why does the company have a document called “employee handbook”?

Where did it come from?

What is its objective?

In this handbook there are only 2 gender distinctions made

1st Female employees get significantly more days for maternal leave than male employees for paternal leave.

2nd breastfeeding benefits are granted for female employees.

Why are these differences made?

Why does the company have a document called “Acceptance of advantages by employees”?

Where did it come from?

What is its objective?

Why does the company have a document called “Letter of Acceptance of advantages by employees”?

Where did it come from?

What is its objective?

Research questions

Gov official/ Stakeholders

- 1 In your view, is Hong Kong a traditional society where men are the breadwinners and women are in charge of the home?
- 2 (if the above is false) How much of that traditional society is still present in Hong Kong?
- 3 Does the Hong Kong government aim to have a family like environment in the territory?
- 4 (If the above is true) why?
- 5 (If the above is true) how does the company achieve this?
- 6 How traditionally Chinese is the Hong Kong Government?
- 7 How much is the Hong Kong Government influenced by the Western ideas in its running of the territory?
- 8 How important are hierarchies in Hong Kong? Why/why not?

- 9 How important is the idea of having a harmonic society in Hong Kong?
- 10 Is the current Chief executive of Hong Kong a father like figure?
- 11 What is the current institutional framework in Hong Kong regarding gender equality?
- 12 What has changes in the last few years?
- 13 Have the changes been positive?
- 14 Can you describe the status of female managers in Hong Kong?
- 15 Does the government have an agenda for gender equality?
- 16 (If the above is true) what is the government agenda regarding gender equality?
- 17 In your view what is the current situation of women in leadership position in Hong Kong?
- 18 Are they supported? Why and how?
- 19 How do female leaders influence society in Hong Kong?
- 20 What are the problems they face?
- 21 How can these problems be overcome?
- 22 How successful do you think the work of the Equal opportunity commission (EOC) has been since its implementation?
- 23 How do you think that the EOC has shaped society in Hong Kong?
- 24 What has been the impact of the EOC on working women? Especially those in managerial positions?
- 25 What else should the EOC do in order to fulfil its mandate?
- 26 What are the limitations that the EOC is currently facing?
- 27 What has been the impact of the EOC in regards to labour relations and the role of women in management?

Appendix D

Questions for the third round of interviews

This appendix is composed on the questions asked in the third round of interviews

Managers and subordinates

Management in general

Could you describe a typical day for a manager at the office? Could you give an example?

How would you describe the management style of women in Hong Kong?

Can you list some of the strengths of female managers?

What do you think are the weaknesses of female managers?

Why do you think it might be difficult to be a female manager in Hong Kong?

How do you see the future of female managers in Hong Kong society?

Are there any differences between Chinese managers (from mainland china) and managers from Hong Kong? What are these differences? Can you give examples?

Do women in management positions behave in a different way their male counterparts in Hong Kong? If they do what are the differences? Can you give any examples?

What are the difficulties that female managers face in Hong Kong?

Gender equality

Describe what you think are the differences between men and women in Hong Kong? Can you give an example of where you have seen these differences? Why do you think these differences are present?

How do you think women would like to change their position in society when compared to men? Do women in Hong Kong want to be equal to men in Hong Kong? Why/ why not? Can you give an example?

Can you name any laws concerned with gender? Have you ever heard of the anti-discriminatory legislation in Hong Kong? How would you describe this law?

Family arrangements

How are domestic chores allocated to men and women in Hong Kong?

Who performs most of the domestic chores (men or women)?

Why do you think (men/women) perform most of the domestic chores?

If both men and women work outside the home, why do women perform more of the domestic chores?

Could you explain what it means to be a patriarchal family? How would you classify families in Hong Kong? (are they patriarchal?) Could you give a practical example?

Why do you think women might get married later in life or have less children than in previous years? Why do you think a women might choose to remain single?

How would you describe the female role within the family? Do you think women are more caring than men within the family? Why/ why not?

How do you reconcile long hours in the office and domestic responsibilities?

How would you describe this situation from a male perspective? Do you feel that men have any professional advantage?

Do you have a domestic helper at home? If yes, how does her work help you? Would you be able to have a paid job without her help?/if not, why not?

How do you feel that rising numbers of female managers may impact upon men? Are men being challenged by women gaining position of power? If yes, To what extent? In what way?

How do you think a woman's social circle would react if she gave up her career to stay at home? Is it acceptable for women in Hong Kong to give up her career to take care of her Children? How do you think a man's social circle would react? Is it the same? Why? Why not?

Colonial Influence

How has British rule over Hong Kong influenced the role of women in Hong Kong society? Could you describe any influence from mainland China on the role of women in Hong Kong society?

Describe any differences between Hong Kong and Mainland China?

Organisational level of analysis

How do employees view the HR policies in this company? Compared to other companies' HR policies, how would you describe your company's HR policies? Are they similar? Can you describe any differences that may exist between foreign companies' HR policies in Hong Kong and local companies' HR policies? How do you feel ownership may affect HR policies? (e.g. family, multi-national etc.) Do you think policies are different because this is a family business? Can you describe a time when the family ownership of this businesses has affected someone you know? How does the fact that the business is a family business affect you? Can you describe any situations which might be different if the company were not a family business?

Institutional level of analysis

How do you think people view the Hong Kong government? Can you describe any instances where the Hong Kong government has affected you or a manager you know? How effective do you think the government is? How do you think it affects you as a manager?

Describe how the government helps female managers in Hong Kong? How do you think female managers view this help? How could the government reduce the challenges facing female managers in Hong Kong

Traditional values

How are Confucius five cardinal relationships viewed in society? What is your view on Confucius five cardinal relationships? (This question was already asked)

How does Confucius philosophy view women? Confucian philosophy women are born inferior to men, do you agree with this view? (If you agree how can women manage men?) if you do not, How relevant is Confucius to Hong Kong today?

CEO and HRM manager

In your view, how does the Hong Kong government influence working women in Hong Kong?

How have government policies affected this specific organisation? How have they affected the female managers in these organisations?

How influential are business leaders in Hong Kong in the shaping of government actions and regulations?

How have the HRM policies of the organisation affected the role of managers in general, and female managers specifically within the organisation?

Do you think that bigger companies/ non-Chinese companies/ multinational companies have a different HRM approach towards their female employees? What are these differences?

Do you think the Hong Kong government should take an active role in helping female managers in Hong Kong with their challenges?

Do you think Hong Kong is different from Mainland China? If yes, in what way?

Institutional level (interest group)

What is the overall aim of your organisation?

How do you achieve your aims?

How successful have you been in recent years in achieving your goals?

In your view, how has the role of the Hong Kong government shaped working women in Hong Kong?

How influential are business leaders in Hong Kong in the shaping of government actions and regulations?

Do you think the Hong Kong government should take an active role in reducing the challenges facing female managers in Hong Kong?

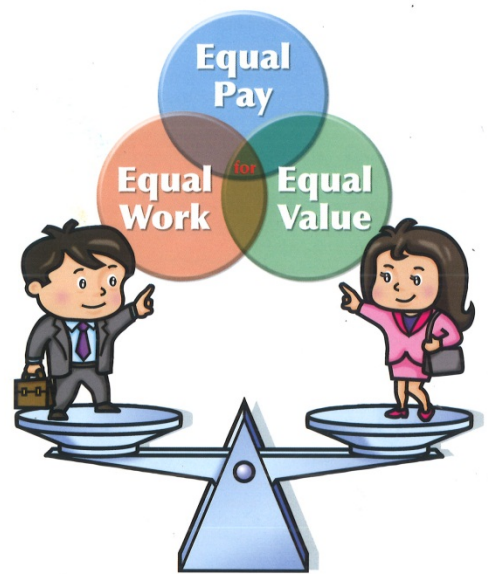
How do you see the future of working women in Hong Kong society?

Do you think Hong Kong is different from Mainland China? If yes, in what way?

Appendix E

Equal pay for Equal work for Equal value Booklet

Easy Read Guide on Equal Pay between Men & Women Under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance



 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

Introduction

Under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO), Cap. 480, it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee, on the ground of sex, in the terms and conditions of employment. Employers should maintain the principles of equal pay for equal work (EPEW) and equal pay for work of equal value (EPEV) between men and women, and determine the pay level of each job according to its value to the organization.

In order to hire and retain the right talents in a highly competitive labour market like Hong Kong, factors such as market situations, performance and personal competencies are important considerations for determining individual pay. A fair and transparent pay determination system helps to enhance staff morale and eliminate the risks of unnecessary complaints and legal actions. It is beneficial to both employers and employees.

This Easy Read Guide provides concise information on the concepts and principles relating to the implementation of equal pay in Hong Kong to enhance public understanding on the subject. **The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has also published a set of practical guidebooks for employers' reference, including:**

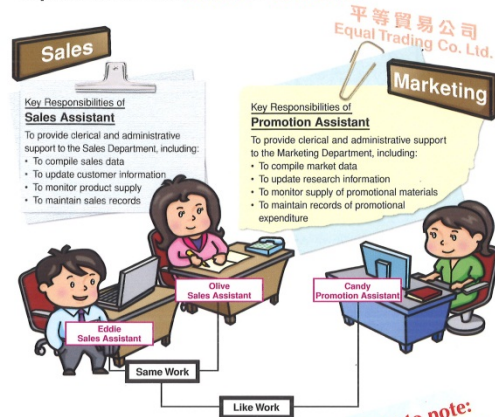
- Guide to Employers on Equal Pay between Men & Women Under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance
- An Illustration on Developing an Analytical Job Evaluation System Free of Sex Bias
- A Systematic Approach to Pay Determination Free of Sex Bias
- Equal Pay Self-audit Kit - A Proactive Approach for Employers to Achieve Equal Pay

Please visit the EOC website or contact the EOC if you wish to obtain hard copies of the guidebooks.

Enquiries : 2511-8211
Fax : 2511-8142
Email : eoc@eoc.org.hk
Website : www.eoc.org.hk

What is "Equal Work"?

Equal Work is the **same** or **like** work.



Both Eddie and Olive are Sales Assistants. The responsibilities of their jobs are the same. They are performing the **same** work.

Candy is a Promotion Assistant. The job nature and responsibilities of Candy are **similar** to Eddie and Olive. Although their job titles are different, the differences in tasks performed are indiscernible.

Point to note:
 In the **same organization**, if two jobs are the same or tasks performed are similar, these jobs should be considered as equal work even though the job titles are different.

What is "Equal Value"?

Equal Value includes: (1) equal work; or
(2) different jobs with the **same** or **similar value**.



Key Responsibilities of Waiter:

- To arrange seating for customers
- To suggest the choice of menu
- To take and follow up on orders
- To serve and attend to customers' needs
- To arrange payment of bills

Owen, Waiter



Key Responsibilities of Bar Attendant:

- To produce hot and cold beverages
- To prepare simple snacks
- To keep sufficient stock for the bar
- To utilize the food material economically
- To prepare food in a timely manner
- To keep food items and the bar in hygienic, safe and tidy conditions
- To introduce new menu items for generating more profit

Edna, Bar Attendant



Equal value means jobs which are assessed to be of the same **value** by the employer. In order to compare the job values of a bar attendant and a waiter, we need to consider the job demands of the two positions...

4

The following checklist will help you to determine "equal value".

When you compare the value of two jobs, you should consider objective factors that are free of sex bias, including:

- ☒ The purpose of the job and its contribution to the business.
- ☒ The importance of the job to the business.
- ☒ The organization structure, including reporting relationships.
- ☒ The job requirements, including education, experience, skills and working conditions, etc.
- ☒ Whether the skills sets are interchangeable.
- ☒ The assessment is about the job, not the person.

In this example, the job purpose and duties of Bar Attendant and Waiter are different. However, the employer decides that the contribution of both jobs are the same to the café. The skills, efforts, responsibilities and working conditions are also similar. Therefore, they are considered as jobs of "equal value".

Based on the job duties, here are the job requirements of a bar attendant and a waiter:

Bar Attendant	Waiter
• Primary education	• Primary education
• One Year relevant experience	• One Year relevant experience
• Preparation of drinks and snacks	• General duties of a waiter
• Knowledge on food hygiene	• Customer oriented and courteous
• 6-day work, 10 hours per shift	• 6-day work, 10 hours per shift
• Hardworking	• Hardworking

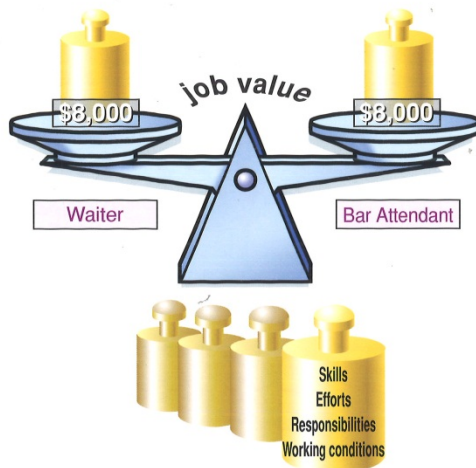
Point to note:
Employers have the responsibility to determine the values of all jobs. Employers may decide the factors and standards for measuring jobs that are appropriate to the organization, according to the business nature and reasonable requirements. These factors must be free of sex bias.

5

What is "Equal Pay"?

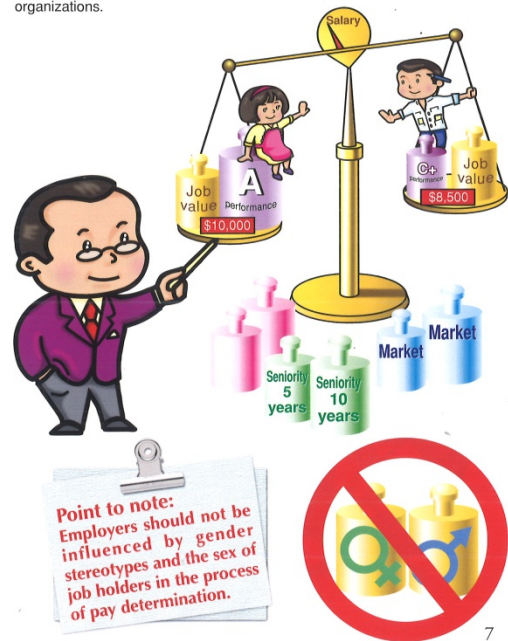
Under the SDO, it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on the ground of his/her **sex** by treating him/her less favourably in the terms and conditions of employment. The pay package may include: cash and other components of pay, such as basic salary, bonus, overtime payment, leave, medical benefit, MPF contribution, etc.

Pay should be determined on the basis of established job value. Employers should apply **consistent criteria** on men and women when developing and implementing good practices on EPEW and EPEV.



6

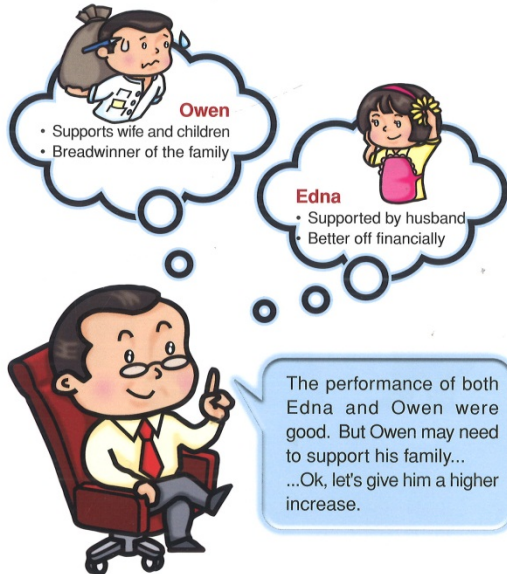
The salary of individual employees performing work of equal value in the same organization may be differentiated by **objective factors**, such as performance, seniority, market situations, etc. These factors should be clearly established by the employer according to reasonable needs of individual organizations.



7

Complaints of EPEW or EPEV under the SDO

During year-end salary review...



8

This is outrageous! My employer said that my job was of the same value as Owen's. We joined the café on the same day and our entry salaries were the same. Although my performance was as good as Owen's, he got a higher salary increase. The employer told me to be more understanding and considerate about Owen being a male...

...But that's not fair!



Edna was upset by the employer's decision. She thought that the employer had discriminated against her on the ground of her sex by giving her less increase in pay. She therefore lodged a sex discrimination complaint with the EOC.



Meanwhile, Christie the dishwasher in the café, also lodged a complaint with the EOC because her salary increase was less than Owen's...

9

Complaint Procedures

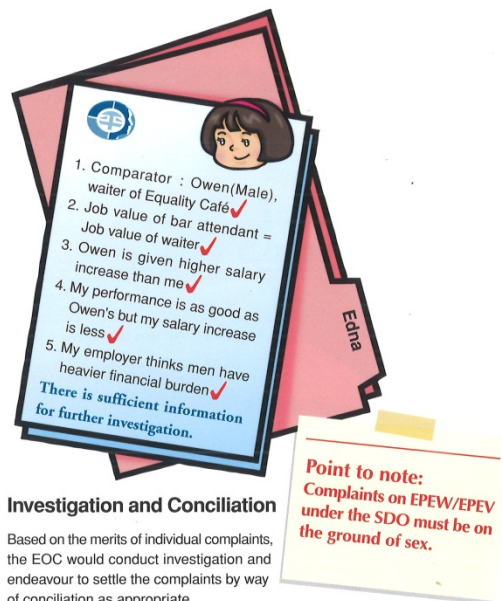
Information to be provided by the complainant to the EOC

A complainant should provide the following information to support his/her allegation(s):

1. Identify a comparator within the same organization (the comparator must be an employee of a different sex)
2. Reason(s) to support that the complainant and the comparator are performing equal work or work of equal value
3. Reason(s) to support his/her belief that he/she is not receiving equal pay for equal work or work of equal value
4. Element of pay in which he/she is being treated less favourably, such as salary increase, bonus, leave, etc.
5. Reason(s) to believe that the less favourable treatment is on the ground of his/her sex



10



Investigation and Conciliation

Based on the merits of individual complaints, the EOC would conduct investigation and endeavour to settle the complaints by way of conciliation as appropriate.

Legal Assistance

If a case is not settled, the complainant may consider to apply for legal assistance from the EOC. The Legal and Complaints Committee of the EOC will consider the case and decide whether to grant legal assistance. Alternatively, the complainant may consider to apply for legal aid from the Legal Aid Department or to take legal action on his/her own.

11



Gee, without transparent pay policies, employees may be confused and start filing complaints. I think I should set up a pay system to ensure my pay decisions are free of sex bias, and have better communication with my employees...

Recommended

Good Equal Pay Practices

1. Apply consistent criteria to the determination of pay for male and female employees performing equal work or work of equal value.
2. Review pay practices to ensure that they are free of sex bias.
3. Make sure that employees understand how pay is determined including:
 - Grading of different jobs
 - Factors to differentiate individual pay (such as seniority, performance, etc).
4. Maintain records of pay decisions.
5. Encourage employees to make enquiries on pay issues to the organization.
6. Make reference to relevant publications issued by the EOC.

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